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ENDLINE PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

BUILDING ALLIANCE FOR LOCAL ADVANCEMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND INVESTMENT (BALADI)

CARITAS LEBANON

FINAL REPORT

JUNE 2022

This document was produced by EnCompass LLC for the USAID Monitoring and Evaluation Program for Lebanon (MEPL) under Prime Contract No. 7200AA20D00011, Task Order 72026821F00005. It was authored by Dr. Imad Salamey in collaboration with Stephanie Bassil of MEPL.

Note: Limited redactions have been made to this version of the report in accordance with the principled exceptions to the presumption in favor of openness established in OMB Bulletin 12-01, "Guidance on Collection of U.S. Foreign Assistance Data."

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COVER PHOTO: Solar panels installed by BALADI-CL on a school's rooftop. (All photos, figures, and maps by MEPL)

ABSTRACT

The Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development, and Investment (BALADI) Activity implemented by Caritas Lebanon (CL) has come to a close after completing ten years of project work worth \$20,586,399. It consisted of two major programmatic assistance responses: The first supported 23 municipalities and unions of municipalities through a Request for Municipal Assistance (RFMA) modality in 2012-2020, and the second assisted 19 faith-based organizations (FBOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) via a Request for Community Assistance (RFCA) modality in 2020-2022. Building on the 2020 final performance evaluation of the RFMA work, the present evaluation examines: a) the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the RFCA work and b) the sustainability of the RFMA work.

The findings in this report highlight important contributions made by the RFCAs to support the urgent needs of marginalized communities following the 2020 economic crisis and the Beirut Port explosion. Though BALADI CL's RFCA activities did not fully align with USAID/Lebanon's 2014-2019 Country Development Cooperation Strategy's Development Objectives, they demonstrated effectiveness, adaptability, and inclusivity in responding to a sudden humanitarian crisis. Short-term sub-awards with limited budgets and narrow coverage were among the factors moderating the project's impact in response to the vast and growing needs of the different marginalized communities. Several pitfalls challenged BALADI CL's implementation, prime among them being CL's lack of expertise in managing an emergency response in multiple sectors under time constraints and a difficult economic and political environment. Moderating these difficulties, however, was CL's previous procurement experience gained from managing RFMA activities, which proved instrumental for the rehabilitation of facilities and the purchase and installation of equipment. The in-kind partnership modality encouraged the engagement of sub-awardees and heightened the stakes for the successful implementation and sustainability of activities. RFCA and RFMA projects remained at risk of being impeded by Lebanon's failing state institutions and deepening economic and political crises.

USAID/Lebanon can align future programming with national recovery plans, integrate humanitarian response within development assistance objectives, and coordinate with its implementing partners (IPs) and relevant stakeholders nationwide to conduct needs assessments. The Mission can also improve program management by ensuring that the selected IPs are specialized in the types of projects being delivered, experienced in emergency response management, capable of attaining national outreach, and ready to sustain staff and do an appropriate handover of projects. Program implementation can be better coordinated through clear Terms of References that reduce responsibility overlap between USAID and the IP while avoiding the delivery of short-term and small-budget sub-awards. USAID can ensure the achievement of sustainable outcomes through a partnership that includes budgeted follow-on plans to secure project continuity and future development. The IP can help optimize resources and reduce costs by (i) building partnerships and connections with other projects/donors working in the same space; (ii) establishing networks between sub-awardees implementing similar projects; (iii) engaging the broader community that supports Lebanon, such as the diaspora as well as other FBOs/NGOs and international organizations; and (iv) integrating, along with USAID, public private partnerships in future programming.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ACRONYMS

A&E	Architecture and Engineering
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
BALADI	Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development, and Investment
BER	Beirut Explosion Response
CA	Cooperative Agreement
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CDCS	Country Development Cooperative Strategy
CL	Caritas Lebanon
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAIS	Data Analysis and Interpretation Session
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
DO	Development Objective
ERAC	Environmental Review and Assessment Checklist
FBO	Faith-Based Organization
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IR	Intermediate Result
IRB	Institutional Review Board
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, And Learning
MEPL	Monitoring Evaluation Program for Lebanon
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
RFCA	Request for Community Assistance
RFMA	Request for Municipal Assistance
RMF	René Moawad Foundation
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SOW	Scope of Work
ToC	Theory of Change
ToK	Transfer of Knowledge
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This endline performance evaluation builds on the final performance evaluation of the Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development, and Investment - Caritas Lebanon (BALADI-CL) Activity conducted in 2020 to examine the relevance and effectiveness of the Request for Municipal Assistance (RFMA) work performed between 2012 and 2020. This endline evaluation assesses whether BALADI-CL's Response for Community Assistance (RFCA) modality introduced in 2020 has been relevant, effective, and sustainable in terms of supporting USAID/Lebanon's 2014-2019 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS). It also explores whether the RFMA modality has demonstrated sustainability. The evaluation draws conclusions, articulates lessons learned, and provides a set of recommendations to help inform future USAID programming in Lebanon.

BALADI-CL BACKGROUND

The BALADI-CL Activity (2012-2022) has come to a close after completing ten years of project work worth \$20,586,399. It was implemented within a turbulent social, political, and economic environment fraught with challenges. The Activity, which is one of USAID's longest-running projects in the country (lasting more than ten years), was able to adapt to and address these challenges thanks to several factors, including receiving large in-kind contributions from partners and local governments. BALADI-CL's activities responded and adapted to a development-emergency nexus amidst an unprecedented economic meltdown in the country and included a wide array of development and emergency responses, including construction, renovation, equipment-installation, capacity-building, and psychosocial support in multiple sectors with the help of municipalities, civil society organizations (CSOs), and faith-based organizations (FBOs) providing services to marginalized communities.

BALADI-CL underwent a major transformation in 2020. While originally launched in 2012 to strengthen local development and increase economic opportunity under an RFMA agreement, it later shifted to an RFCA modality to support non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and FBOs in responding to Lebanon's severe economic fallout and the destruction brought about by the 2020 Beirut Port explosion. Throughout its lifetime, BALADI-CL received 17 different contract modifications that amended/expanded its scope of work and extended its end date to June 2022. BALADI-CL assisted 23 municipalities and unions of municipalities in its RFMA phase and 19 NGOs and FBOs in its RFCA phase.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS, DESIGN, METHODS, AND LIMITATIONS

The questions selected for this endline performance evaluation examine the extent to which BALADI-CL's RFCA work responded to urgent community needs, in line with USAID-Lebanon's 2014-2019 CDCS, and whether it was implemented to benefit marginalized groups, women, and youth. These evaluation questions look at how BALADI-CL managed the Activity's material and human resources while abiding by quality-assurance standards and environmental regulations and how its management team was able to adapt to changing circumstances, communicate its outreach plan, and generate awareness about the Activity's benefits. Further questions probe for effective implementation and means for achieving intended objectives. This includes questions that explore relevant factors that contributed to or hindered the achievement of outcomes, the improvement of equitable delivery of public services to marginalized groups, and the implementation of activities in participatory and inclusive ways. Finally, the evaluation asks whether BALADI-CL is able to sustain its activities at both the municipal and community levels. It examines whether BALADI-CL has instated a long-term plan to build on the benefits gained, given the various exogenous and endogenous challenges facing the country.

This evaluation utilizes a multi-method approach to develop evidence-based findings and draw conclusions (Annex 2). It compiles primary and secondary data from various sources. The evaluation

team gathered secondary data from various BALADI-CL Activity documents, including its annual and quarterly progress reports, the final performance evaluation conducted in 2020, and various surveys. The evaluation team utilized and analyzed aggregate data from BALADI-CL Activity documents to make objective judgments. For primary data, the team conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) with stakeholder, focus group discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries, and site visits (SVs) to beneficiary sites (Annex 3). KII and FGD respondents included USAID and CL staff, sub-awardees, and beneficiaries. The sampling approach adopted ensures a representative selection of projects. The team analyzed the data through a content-coding technique to extract empirically verified conclusions and make corresponding recommendations.

The evaluation is limited by the fact that many of the RFCA activities were recently launched, which makes examining their long-term outcomes and sustainability premature.

EVALUATION FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

RELEVANCE

Responding to community and development needs: The findings revealed that BALADI-CL's RFCA activities were able to respond to the critical and urgent needs of vulnerable communities, despite their limited coverage and small budget. However, BALADI-CL's RFCA did not fully align with the 2014-2019 CDCS's Development Objectives (DOs), which were established prior to the onset of the economic crisis in late 2019, early 2020.

Building partnerships in a turbulent environment: BALADI-CL has benefitted from a sizable in-kind cost-share contribution that enhanced its ability to withstand economic and security shocks and adapt to an increasingly challenging environment. The procurement of equipment amid a collapsing banking sector and lack of credit was an important factor in the consolidation of partnerships with local organizations.

Contributing to social capital: BALADI-CL supported several FBOs and NGOs working on meeting urgent community needs and fostered cooperative social responsibility and the preservation of social capital among the marginalized. This contribution could have been a more effective investment had a comprehensive community needs assessment been conducted by BALADI CL in the selected communities in order to validate proposed projects and identify possible collaboration opportunities between key stakeholders and had a wider pool of applicants participated.

Ensuring inclusivity in project design: BALADI-CL demonstrated a strong tendency to be gender inclusive on all levels of formulation in its project design. It also included youth and marginalized groups in its beneficiary pool and as members of its project management.

EFFECTIVENESS

Managing amid lack of specialization: Certain management challenges arose from CL's lack of technical expertise in implementing projects and from its sub-awardees' limited experience in grant making.

Managing short-term projects: Implementation was sometimes hindered by deficiencies in CL's management and coordination abilities due to staff shortages, lack of institutionalism, and overlap in management roles. Staff turnover was frequent due to multiple modifications and short-term assignments. Overlapping responsibilities between USAID, CL, and sub-awardees resulted in disparate expectations. For instance, BALADI-CL were deeply involved in developing proposals and project plans for sub-awardees while at the same time participating with USAID/Lebanon in the selection of awards. In addition, CL faced planning challenges, as it did not incorporate USAID's Environmental Review and Assessment Checklist (ERAC) process in its budget early on. Nevertheless, despite multiple risks and challenges, BALADI-CL managed to deliver the intended outputs.

Facilitating implementation through ToK and heightened benefits: Implementation was facilitated by transfer of knowledge (ToK) in procurement since CL built the institutional capacity of its partners

and learned valuable lessons from its RFMA projects. ToK was instrumental in the relative management and implementation successes of RFCA projects, which enabled the efficient implementation of the BALADI-CL Activity and facilitated its adaptation to the changing environment. Sub-awardees' heightened benefits and in-kind contributions facilitated interactive implementation processes.

SUSTAINABILITY

Responding to urgent community needs: Empowering relevant FBOs and NGOs responding to urgent community needs was a key aspect of project sustainability under BALADI-CL. The installation of essential equipment required by sub-awardees to operate sets the stage for ongoing community programming and service provision. Municipal projects, on the other hand, that respond to urgent community needs and are linked to cooperative private-public partnerships (PPPs) have proven sustainable despite growing challenges.

In-kind partnership modality: The in-kind partnership modality was a strong component of project sustainability under BALADI-CL. Linked programs, such as training and community service, provided additional incentives for the sustainable use of equipment and performing required maintenance thereon. Local ownership of projects increased the stakes in preserving and further developing activities.

Exogenous obstacles: The sustainability of BALADI-CL projects is threatened by the consequences of further political-economic deterioration that may exacerbate the extended power shortages, rising fuel prices, and currency fluctuations. Other essential state provisions, such as water and education, that have been weakened have changed development priorities for donors. Sustainable development conditions are further undermined by a whole set of additional economic difficulties stemming from lack of financing for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), collapse of the banking sector, the currency devaluation and fluctuation of the exchange rate, declining foreign direct investments, sanctions imposed against local produce by Gulf States, and sanctions imposed by international actors on Syria that prevent normal transit and cross border business activities.

Endogenous obstacles: The sustainability of BALADI-CL's local development projects is further weakened by the fact that BALADI-CL, by design, has limited coordination with other existing national or international recovery plans, which limited the national outcomes of the Activity and kept benefits dispersed among various, often remote, localities. Additional risks include lack of a comprehensive partnerships, particularly with the private sector. Potential political capture, change in municipal leadership, and shifting priorities are additional risk factors. It should also be noted that long-term projects face different sustainability challenges compared to short-term ones. Long-term projects (RFMA) are affected by a fast-changing environment, such as the emergence of (i) new technological innovations that render existing equipment inefficient or (ii) economic and political instabilities that shuffle development priorities. These factors can undermine original ambitions. Short-term projects (RFCA), on the other hand, risk producing minimal impacts in addressing a growing community need.

Common to most projects is the lack of potential replicability and scalability amid high investment costs, lack of follow-up, and absent interlinkages between different funded projects.

EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

ALIGN PROJECT RELEVANCE

Recommendation I: USAID/Lebanon should integrate development and emergency activities in future program design. BALADI-CL's RFMA local community development objectives were negatively implicated by changing priorities amid the economic crisis. Those of RFCA, on the other hand, were of short-term return and detached from the Mission's development objectives on the longer run. BALADI-CL would have been more relevant had the IP been able to follow up on

sustainable operation plans for local municipal development projects and on the sustainability plans of FBOs and NGOs .

Recommendation 2: USAID/Lebanon and its implementing partners (IPs) should establish a closer coordination with other existing national or international recovery plans. This strategy is to be carefully formulated in emergency conditions, where state institutions may become relevant to response and recovery, such as the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Internal Security Forces, and the High Relief Commission. Other donors, international organizations, and the Lebanese diaspora may also become partners in offering relief, such as those provided in the aftermath of the Beirut port explosion. The ability of a US-funded project to integrate itself within the wider national response plan helps optimize resources, increase its impact, and elevate the relevance of its intervention.

Recommendation 3: USAID/Lebanon should ensure its IPs conduct a comprehensive national community needs assessment prior to sub-awards. This can help identify priority needs, foster consortium-building between sub-awardees, and achieve a more rigorous proposal solicitation phase that ensures a wide and inclusive pool of applicants. The relevance of BALADI-CL’s RFCA work to community needs was constrained by small and short-term investments as well as limited coverage. Such limitations necessitate that IPs conduct future proposal solicitation in a more rigorous approach to ensure a wide and inclusive pool of applicants. The selection of awards can then proceed while taking into consideration the appropriate targeting of beneficiaries and relying on a comprehensive national needs assessment.

IMPROVE MANAGEMENT

Recommendation 4: USAID/Lebanon should incorporate further capacity building/strengthening into project design and ensure its IPs target new and emerging partners and small businesses for their awards.¹ This will help ensure diversification—and aligns with CDCS 2021-26 development hypothesis.² FBOs play an important role in responding to emergencies since they possess a wide community outreach and elaborate service provisions. However, many of these organizations lack management specializations, which undermines their effectiveness.³ Thus, building their capacity is urgent to ensure the good management of service delivery and emergency response in different sectors. This can be achieved following a deeper organizational assessment covering human-resource systems, procurement, financial management, and communication. Based on this assessment, a capacity-development action plan can be developed to support the IPs in improving their performance.

Recommendation 5: When contracting an IP for a local development Activity, USAID/Lebanon should select a cross-sectarian NGO or multiple FBOs affiliated with different sects. This/these organization/s should be specialized in emergency response and able to take on a central role in the solicitation of participation and the implementation of a nation-wide partnership. This will ensure diversity of coverage and specialization in management.

Recommendation 6: USAID/Lebanon’s selection of an IP for a local development Activity should be based on the latter’s capacity to maintain staff beyond short-term project delivery. The IP should be able to perform a smooth handover of project assets and transfer of learning in key positions to the new project owner(s), as needs arise.

¹ USAID provided Caritas with a full capacity building program and institutional support through Baladi CAP.

² [Lebanon Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2021-2026 | U.S. Agency for International Development \(usaid.gov\)](https://www.usaid.gov/lebanon/country-development-cooperation-strategy-2021-2026)

³ CARITAS conducted a pre-assessment of applicants’ qualifications prior to sub-awards.

STRENGTHEN IMPLEMENTATION

Recommendation 7: USAID/Lebanon should advise its IPs to avoid short-term community response projects (6-12 months) and prioritize mid-term projects (12-24 months) instead. This can help stabilize the IPs' human resources and provides sufficient time to monitor progress and measure outcomes.

Recommendation 8: USAID/Lebanon should maintain BALADI-CL's implementation practices in future programming and establish clear Terms of References with the new IPs to define roles and avoid the overlapping of responsibilities.

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE OUTCOMES

Recommendation 9: USAID/Lebanon should require its IPs to budget for follow-up plans and approach ongoing projects with a similar proposition. This process can be managed through a monitoring plan. Such measure will help preserve local interests, sustain long-term partnerships, and avoid the equipment drop-off approach (i.e., delivering equipment only without relevant capacity building or service programming).

Recommendation 10: USAID/Lebanon should require its IPs to ensure that projects providing an emergency or disaster response: a) build partnerships and connections with other projects/donors working in the same space, b) network with other sub-awardees on the same project, and c) engage in the broader community that supports Lebanon, such as the diaspora as well as other NGOs and international donors. During turbulent times, the Lebanese diaspora has proven to be an active stakeholder in safeguarding local development and response to emergencies.

Recommendation 11: USAID/Lebanon should design its Activities as to include PPP components that support sub-awards that aim to respond to local community needs. The participation of the private sector provides for the mutual and long-term benefits of communities as well as to the nexus of emergency and development.

EVALUATION PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS

EVALUATION PURPOSE

This endline performance evaluation of the Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development, and Investment – Caritas Lebanon (BALADI-CL) Activity is conducted by the Monitoring and Evaluation Program for Lebanon (MEPL) implemented by EnCompass LLC and Management Systems International (MSI).

The evaluation builds on BALADI-CL's final performance evaluation conducted in February 2020 (henceforth referred to as the 2020 evaluation) and intends to inform USAID/Lebanon about the Activity's performance and achievements, sustainability, and lessons learned for future programming. It looks at the extent to which BALADI-CL Request for Municipal Assistance (RFMA) activities achieved outputs, outcomes, and set objectives. For example, it discusses BALADI-CL/RFMA's efforts to empower municipalities and enable them to implement local-development projects to improve the social and economic conditions in their communities, with a special focus on host community needs in light of the Syrian refugee crisis that started in 2011.

This endline performance evaluation includes findings from the 2020 evaluation but primarily focuses on how the BALADI-CL adapted and accomplished its Request for Community Assistance (RFCA) objectives as of 2020.⁴ By documenting successes, challenges, and lessons learned, the evaluation informs future programming for both USAID/Lebanon and CL and contributes to the Mission's commitment to continuously adapt and learn in emergency situations. This evaluation also addresses environmental compliance and the inclusion of women, youth, and marginalized groups as crosscutting elements in BALADI-CL/RFCA's activities. In addition, it assesses BALADI-CL's institutional and managerial context and capacity to manage similar activities in terms of human resources, procurement, reporting, and monitoring.

Ultimately, the evaluation gathers and generates data to gauge BALADI-CL's progress in contributing to the achievement of USAID/Lebanon's 2014-2019 Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)'s Development Objectives (DOs) 1 and 2. Specifically, it focuses on how and whether BALADI-CL achieved to its overall goals of (1) improving the governance of municipalities and public service delivery; and (2) establishing sustainable local social capital, while considering the effect of many contextual factors outside the scope of the Activity, including the economic and political constraints during the same implementation period.

In line with the above, and with BALADI-CL coming to a close in June 2022, this evaluation seeks to assess the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the BALADI-CL/RFCA work and the sustainability of the BALADI-CL/RFMA work. It reflects on the successes and the lessons learned to inform future USAID programming in Lebanon, especially as the economic and political context continues to change.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

RELEVANCE

The evaluation seeks to assess the extent to which BALADI-CL/RFCA was relevant in terms of achieving the Mission's objectives and in its ability to respond to urgent community needs while targeting marginalized groups, women, and youth (Annex 3). It also assesses whether the Activity was designed in a gender-sensitive and -inclusive manner. The three evaluation questions used to address relevance were:

⁴ More information on RFMA and RFCA is found in the [Background](#) section

1. To what extent did BALADI-CL/RFCA's goals and results align with and contribute to the USAID/Lebanon 2014-2019 CDCS?
2. To what extent did the awarded NGOs address critical community-identified needs, particularly those of women and youth?
3. How did projects adapt as community needs changed?

EFFECTIVENESS

Another objective of the evaluation is to reveal whether BALADI-CL was able to effectively manage the delivery of sub-awarded projects toward intended outputs. The following evaluation questions were used to measure management effectiveness:

1. To what extent did BALADI-CL/RFCA effectively manage material and human resources?
2. To what extent did the Activity comply with quality assurance requirements, procurement procedures, and environmental measures?
3. How did BALADI-CL/RFCA's management adapt when the Activity context changed in 2020, and what mechanisms and procedures most supported rapid Activity adjustment?
4. To what extent did the Activity adhere to its Communication and Outreach Plan and generate awareness of the Activity, its results, and USAID/Lebanon?

Effective project implementation was another important indicator of successful achievement of project outputs toward outcomes. The following evaluation questions were used to measure implementation effectiveness:

1. To what extent did BALADI-CL/RFCA achieve its goals and objectives?
2. What factors (endogenous or exogenous) contributed to the achievement or non-achievement of results?
3. What evidence is there that BALADI-CL/RFCA contributed to improved public service delivery in local communities?
4. To what extent were BALADI-CL results experienced by communities equitably? Were women, youth, and marginalized groups able to access/participate in activities and experience results? What were the barriers (if any) that hindered their participation, and how were these barriers addressed?
5. To what extent were the awarded projects developed, implemented, and closed in a participatory and gender-sensitive and -inclusive way?
6. What were the major challenges encountered, and the major lessons learned?

SUSTAINABILITY

Two main questions were asked to determine whether BALADI-CL in its RFMA and RFCA components was sustainable:

1. How did the BALADI-CL Activity plan for sustainability/long-term results, be it at the NGO or the municipality level?
2. How did BALADI-CL leverage institutional factors, community groups/members (including women, youth, and people from diverse backgrounds), enterprises, and other elements to maximize the likelihood of sustained results?
3. What are the major factors, challenges, and opportunities encountered to sustain activities at the municipal or NGO level?

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Per the objectives of this evaluation, several questions were included to capture the lessons learned and make appropriate recommendations as follow:

1. What are the key lessons and recommendations in terms of USAID performance (program and context management, cross-USAID effort, political access and influencing)?
2. What lessons have been learned at the project level? What lessons on gender and inclusion were learned? What evidence is there of adaptive programming?
3. What are the key lessons and recommendations for the strategic design of the program going forward?

BALADI-CL BACKGROUND

BALADI is a USAID Activity implemented by CL among other implementing partners (IPs). Its goal is to foster long-term collaboration between municipalities/unions of municipalities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and private-sector entities to implement and manage community projects and deliver services. More specifically, the Activity seeks to: (1) Improve the governance of municipalities and improve public service delivery, and (2) establish sustainable local social capital. The Activity’s intermediate results (IRs) include: more capable municipalities working inclusively with citizens to effectively accomplish local development objectives (IR1), enhanced participatory decentralized governance acting as a catalyst for social capital development (IR2), and broad-based development through support of locally-championed plans and reforms (IR3).⁵

The Activity was designed to support the USAID/Lebanon 2014-2019 CDCS, contributing to DOI: *Public sector capacity to deliver services improved through IR 1.3: Improved governance in addressing citizens’ needs in public service delivery*, and DO2: *Economic opportunity enhanced through IR 2.1: Increased private sector competitiveness*.

BALADI-CL PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND APPROACH

OVERVIEW

Originally, USAID awarded two cooperative agreements (CAs) to René Moawad Foundation (RMF)—CA No.AID-268-A-12-00004—and CL—CA No.AID-268-A-12-00005—to implement the BALADI project. The BALADI CA had an aggregate value of \$27 million over a period of five years; from September 30, 2012 to September 29, 2017. The BALADI-CL Activity was later extended until November 2019. This is referred to in this report as RFMA I and II.

RFMA had a total budget of \$12,928,203 and implemented the BALADI project in 14 Lebanese districts. It was designed to support achievement of the 2014-2019 CDCS DOI, through achievement of IR 1.3, and CDCS DO2 through achievement of IR 2.1. In particular, the project was designed to encourage local government service delivery by supporting municipalities and municipal unions nationwide to address citizen governance and economic needs. Through this assistance, BALADI CL offered an opportunity for municipalities, municipal unions, and Mayors to draft and implement developmental projects in the following six sectors: agro-processing services, sustainable and renewable energy, sports centers, equipment, recreational and multipurpose facilities, and eco-tourism (See Annex 8).

Following the rapid economic deterioration in the country, USAID/Lebanon granted CL additional funds under Request for Community Assistance I (RFCA I) in July 2020. Further funds were allocated later that year under Beirut Explosion Response (BER) to support nine NGOs, including faith-based organizations (FBOs), through in-kind small grants (ranging from \$14,000 to \$50,000 each). In February 2021, BALADI-CL launched RFCA II, ending in September 2021, to support additional

⁵ [USAID/Lebanon Country Development Cooperation Strategy \(CDCS\) - 2014-2020](#)

NGOs in performing their functions. In July 2021, under modification 16, USAID/Lebanon granted CL an extension of five months until February 2022 and later extended the deadline once again until June 2022. The combined modifications and extensions increased the total funds of BALADI-CL to \$14,649,561. The overall cost-share of the project became \$5,936,838, bringing the total fund for both RFMA and RFCA, since inception to date, to \$20,586,399 (See Figure 1 for the different phases of program).

CL was to dedicate its efforts starting June 2021 to complete and close out projects under RFMA I and II while implementing the operational and sustainability plan, including the leadership trainings; completing equipment disposition memos for municipal projects and verifying the intended use of public spaces; completing equipment purchases and training activities for sub grants issued under RFMA; and completing the project’s final close-out.

RFCA APPROACH

Under BALADI-CL/RFCA, the project utilized a competitive grants program modality to sub-award 19 NGOs and FBOs and achieve program objectives. These objectives included providing services to vulnerable populations through creating 12 new employment opportunities, increasing women’s participation in United States Government (USG)-assisted programs by 40% to improve productive economic resources, and introducing 32 training or capacity-building activities (modification 16). RFCAs took into consideration the new economic landscape and the post-Beirut Port explosion environment to support urgent community needs while assisting BALADI-CL in achieving its transition towards closure.

To date, BALADI-CL has delivered assistance to 23 municipalities and unions of municipalities across 14 districts (Aley, Metn, Baabda, Hermel, Baalbeck, Rachaya, West Bekaa, Zahle, Hasbaya, Nabatieh, Tyre, Bint Jbeil, Marjeyoun, and Saida). Municipal assistance included the implementation of development projects in the following sectors: agro-processing services, sustainable and renewable energy, sports centers, equipment, recreational and multipurpose facilities, and eco-tourism. In addition to municipal assistance, BALADI-CL supported 19 NGOs, including FBOs, through in-kind small grants (averaging \$35,000 each) under RFCA I and II and BER (Figure 1).

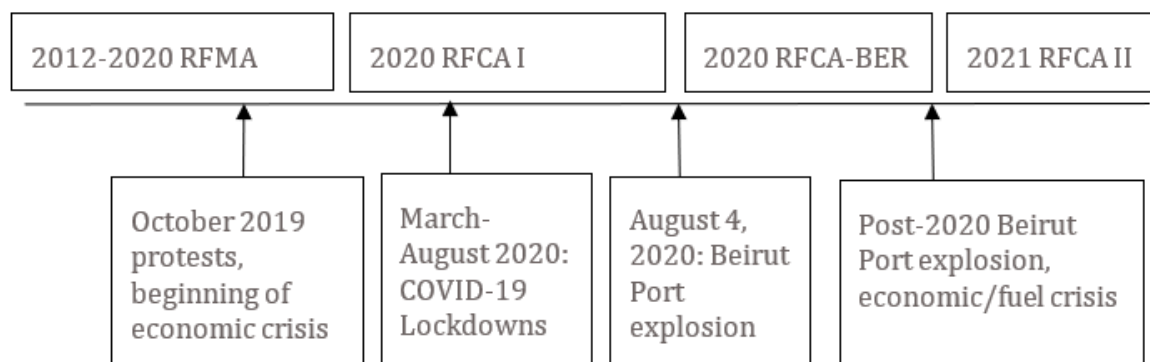


Figure 1: BALADI-CL’s timeline in a turbulent, fast-changing environment

From 2019 onward, BALADI-CL faced challenges caused by the rapidly changing operating environment (Figure 1). The Activity faced major delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic (and resulting lockdown and restrictions in mobility). Moreover, the unprecedented economic and financial collapse (including currency devaluation) created delays in procurement and affected BALADI-CL’s collaboration with suppliers. Lastly, following consultation between USAID/Lebanon and CL, the Activity adapted to the fast-deteriorating economic conditions by launching BALADI-CL’s RFCA I and II and supported urgent interventions to aid communities that were affected by the Beirut port explosion in August 2020 through the RFCA BER. These challenges resulted in a cost extension for BALADI-CL from September 2021 through February 2022, with additional funds

totaling \$20,586,399. The Activity has completed and closed out municipal projects through operations and sustainability plans, finalized RFCA I and II, and concluded RFCA BER interventions.

LEBANON CONTEXT POST-OCTOBER 2019

POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL TURBULENCES

Since the launch of the BALADI Program in 2012, Lebanon has experienced a turbulent political and economic environment. Starting in 2013, political disputes prevented the election of a president, and the office was left vacant for more than two years. There were also recurring cabinet resignations, political paralyzes, and deadlocks. Between 2013 and 2021, five different cabinets were formed with periodical transitional vacuums under caretaker governments lasting 36 months in total.⁶

The conflict in Syria, which started in 2011, forced more than 1.5 million Syrians to seek refuge in Lebanon. A protracted situation of displacement exerted immense pressures on local resources, shifting local priorities from development toward relief. In 2019, the economic situation in the country went down a rapid deterioration path. The gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by about 25% in 2020 and fell another 10-15% in 2021. Lebanon defaulted on its sovereign debt in March 2020, and between 2019 and 2021 its currency lost almost 90% of its value. Efforts by the government to reduce public debt by printing currency led to hyperinflation, which cost most Lebanese their bank savings and reduced their salaries and pensions to some 10% of their 2019 value. Human suffering became widespread in the country as unemployment rose to 40%. More than half of the population now lives below the poverty line, and malnutrition, especially among children and refugees, is spreading.⁷

The economic crisis that stormed Lebanon is not just severe but virtually uniquely so in several regards. Lebanon imports some 80% of its basic goods, including foodstuffs, but it no longer has sufficient hard currency to pay for them. High import dependence is largely a result of the Lebanese version of the “Dutch Disease:” over some two decades, an over-valued currency undermined most productive sectors in favor of a dependent, rentier economy reliant upon constant infusions of foreign capital. But from 2011 onward, even this rentier economy stagnated. The Lebanese are left with little on which to fall back by way of domestic economic foundations and have few export opportunities to exploit, even with what is now a much more competitive currency.

All this happened and continues to happen in a context where gender inequalities are pre-dominant and pre-existent. According to the World Economic Forum's Gender Gap report published in 2020, Lebanon has one of the highest overall gender gaps in the world, ranking 145 out of 153 countries. Speaking of economy and livelihood, only one in four women have employment, compared to three in four men. Within the refugee community in Lebanon, women are the most food-insecure, and many experience increased vulnerability as the heads of households.

Lebanon confirmed its first COVID-19 case on February 21, 2020. The emergency measures adopted shortly thereafter to fight the pandemic exacerbated the preexisting economic catastrophe. The lockdown imposed in March 2020 brought economic activity to a near-complete halt, with further suspended job and income losses. More businesses failed, and poverty spread fueled by rising unemployment, lower real wages, and the loss of savings due to the collapse of the local currency. Bread, medicine, and meat were all in short supply. Moreover, the government was no longer able to finance its own electric company thus plunging the country in prolonged blackouts. The emigration of skilled youth also accelerated at an unprecedented rate.⁸

⁶ Salamey, I. 2021. *The Government and Politics of Lebanon*. New York: Peter Lang.

⁷ Lebanon Political Economy Assessment 2021. USAID.

⁸ Ibid.

According to the Internal Security Forces, many women and girls in Lebanon faced and continue to face extensive gender-based violence threats, risks, and incidents that doubled during the pandemic lockdowns. In addition, many girls and boys dropped out of school because of the remote learning modality and the lack of access to the needed information technology. Education leakage combined with stressful economic conditions caused an increase in child marriage and child labor.⁹

THE BEIRUT PORT EXPLOSION

On August 4, 2020, just as the Lebanese thought things could not possibly get worse, an estimated 2,750 tons of unsafely stored ammonium nitrate exploded at the Beirut Port, which is adjacent to the downtown area and the capital's commercial district. The catastrophic explosion killed over 200 people and left 6,500 wounded. The port area was decimated, and the capital showered with broken glass. The magnitude of the blast, shooting outward from the city's port, destroyed large parts of the city. Some 200,000 homes were obliterated, and 300,000 people were made homeless. Across the capital, windows shattered, and facades collapsed. Most buildings in the capital suffered some form of damage or were structurally affected. In an assessment carried out in the immediate aftermath of the explosion, the World Bank estimated the damage from the blast at \$4.6 billion, with an additional \$2.9 billion in related economic losses.¹⁰ Furthermore, a report published by UN Women on August 13, 2020, following the Beirut Port blast, showed that women and girls became less resilient to shocks and are often facing more vulnerabilities including gender-based violence.¹¹

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT, PRIVATE SECTOR, AND CSOS

As a consequence of the crises and events described above, local development in Lebanon was affected at various levels, most critically as regards failing anticipations for greater administrative decentralization. Political reforms were curtailed by the recurring economic crises and political deadlocks. Currency devaluations and fuel and power shortages devastated municipalities and interrupted their development priorities.

The economic crisis had a direct toll on the private sector as well. The collapse of the banking and credit system put many private companies and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) out of business, leading to unemployment in excess of 40%. For SMEs, which represent 90% of businesses and employ 50% of the country's labor force, the economic meltdown resulted in inventory losses and diminished personal equity by more than 80%.¹²

Civil society organizations (CSOs), on the other hand, have in various ways attempted to adapt to the new circumstances. Some increased their readiness and capacities to respond to emergencies, thus providing critical assistance and support to the victims of the Beirut port explosion while others turned to support the immediate needs of the increasing number of citizens thrown into poverty.

PRIOR EVALUATION OF BALADI-CL/RFMA

In February 2020, USAID/Lebanon commissioned a final performance evaluation of BALADI-CL.¹³ The evaluation concluded that important results were observed in BALADI-CL's progress towards its objectives of improving public services and creating economic opportunities. However, the report pointed out shortcomings in the Activity's effectiveness, citing failure to handle construction projects due to management inexperience and lack of expertise in architecture and engineering (A&E). The

⁹ Fighting the spread of Lebanon's silent pandemic: Domestic abuse | Al Arabiya English

¹⁰ World Bank: Lebanon blast caused damage up to \$4.6 billion (yahoo.com)

¹¹ Lebanon Political Economy Assessment 2021. USAID.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ [PA00X4S3.pdf \(resiliencelinks.org\)](#)

evaluation also highlighted other relevant deficiencies in management and implementation effectiveness, including in terms of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and outreach and communication. The evaluation concluded that, prior to 2020, BALADI-CL's response to local demands had excessively been driven by construction projects, thus undermining other objectives, particularly those aimed at improving governance and local social capital. Several recommendations were proposed, including the need to better communicate sub-awards expectations with a longer start-up timeline, improve memoranda of understanding (MOUs) with municipalities, streamline the sub-award program with more resources, provide more gender-specific training to staff, and include a baseline of gender gap towards sensitizing partners and beneficiaries.

EVALUATING REQUESTS FOR COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE - BALADI-CL/RFCA

USAID/Lebanon was capable of responding swiftly to the fast-paced economic deterioration that started in October 2019. This was evident in the Mission extending the timeframe for BALADI-CL through RFCAs and agreement modifications. The focus was to support NGOs and FBOs to achieve a fast crisis response. BALADI-CL/RFCA implemented and managed a sub-award program in response to emerging community needs in a short time-interval, while also transitioning towards contract closure. Now that the Activity is coming to a close, it is important to consider questions about whether such an approach was appropriate and relevant to USAID's country objectives, whether CL was effective in executing and managing the activities, and whether the designed responses were sustainable, gender sensitive, and inclusive.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

This evaluation utilizes a multi-method approach. The evaluation team conducted document reviews and collected data from semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs), focus group discussions (FGDs), and site visits (SVs) in order to compile and analyze information toward findings. The tools are available in Annex 3.

The team collected primary qualitative data over 14 days through 21 KIIs, five FGDs (with 23 men and 21 women), and eight SVs. The locations of the sampled organizations and municipalities are available in Annex 14. Secondary data review was mostly focused on BALADI-CL's quarterly progress reports, cooperative agreement and related modifications, and 2020 evaluation in addition to an analysis of lists of RFCA beneficiaries and other documents (Annex 4).

The evaluation team applied purposive sampling to select 10 RFCA and four RFMA projects based on findings from the 2020 evaluation and BALADI-CL's progress reports, with the objective to cover all sectors in diverse locations. For the KIIs, the team interviewed USAID staff, CL staff, heads or members of municipalities, and project/site managers, either online or in-person. The team also conducted FGDs with community members to learn about their experiences and satisfaction with the services provided by BALADI-CL. The team visited four of BALADI-CL's 19 RFCA projects and four of the 23 RFMA projects with which BALADI-CL had partnered.

The 14 days of data collection were spread over a period of 4 weeks, longer than what was originally planned due to national holidays and the limited availability of some interviewees. The team selected FGD participants based on convenience in terms of distance and transportation and mitigated response biases by clearly explaining to participants that the anonymity of the data collected would be ensured. The team did not identify any recall bias, as none of the participants had issues remembering details about the projects or the services provided. The team transcribed, coded, and summarized all interviews then held two data-analysis and -interpretation sessions (DAIS) to share emerging themes and patterns and develop finding statements.

The evaluation team was composed of a team leader supported by six MEPL team members throughout the evaluation.

EVALUATION FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FINDINGS

This endline performance evaluation has three overarching objectives aimed at assessing the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the BALADI CL Activity. To attain these objectives, the evaluation team used a set of evaluation questions to generate findings and recommendations.

ACTIVITY RELEVANCE (RFCA)

Q1.1 To what extent did BALADI-CL/RFCA's goals and results align with and contribute to the USAID/Lebanon 2014-2019 CDCS?

Finding 1.1: BALADI-CL was relevant to emerging and changing community needs (RFCA I, BER, RFCAII) and has modestly contributed to DOI-Sub-IR 1.4.1 in supporting CSOs but was not directly aligned with the contexts of democratic governance, public service provision, or economic empowerment emphasized in DOI (particularly IR1.3) and DO2.

The evaluation team found that, despite responding to urgent community needs, the objectives set in BALADI-CL/RFCA's M&E plan lacked a clear alignment with the 2014-2019 CDCS DOs and IRs. RFCA supported NGOs and FBOs in responding to an emergency situation, which can partially be accounted for by DOI-Sub-IR 1.4.1: *Citizens' concerns increasingly addressed through CSO initiatives* and can be indicated under Sub-IR 1.4.1a: *Percentage of citizens who feel that their concerns are well represented by USG assisted civil society organizations*. Nonetheless, RFCA had no relevance to democratic governance or public-service provision, unlike BALADI-CL/RFMA (See Annex 9).

RFCA attempted to modify aims in order to adapt to the new environment. Modification 15 states that the RFCA aims "to provide quality social services across Lebanon to vulnerable people". Modification 16 reiterates the same objectives for RFCA I and II "in fulfilling the urgent needs of vulnerable communities across the entire country." The Beirut Blast's RFCA echoed a similar urgent response (see Annex 7). Modification 16 led to the establishment of the Activity Results Framework and attempted to align RFCA activities with BALADI and CDCS objectives (Annex 7).

As reported by USAID/Lebanon staff, the deviation from the original BALADI/CDCS objectives to those established under RFCA stems from many factors, namely the modification of the project in response to emerging and immediate needs rather than planning for long-term development objectives. Evidently, post-2020 conditions were different than those of 2014 when the development goals were established to "improve accountability and credibility of public institutions, and broader economic prosperity."

Q1.2 To what extent did the awarded NGOs address critical community-identified needs, particularly those of women and youth?

Finding 1.2: BALADI-CL's awarded projects served women, youth, children, persons with special needs, and minority groups across the country, in all districts. BALADI-CL selected sub-awards in an interactive and participatory process to ensure they served critical community needs. Yet, a significant portion of vulnerable groups and communities did not participate in BALADI. Modest funds and limited coverage prevented a more-comprehensive inclusion.

RFCA's initial aim was to help FBOs and NGOs provide urgent socio-economic services to vulnerable communities throughout the country. Modifications stated that the aim was "to provide quality social services across Lebanon to vulnerable people... in fulfilling the urgent needs of vulnerable communities across the entire country." (RFCA Mod 15 & RFCA Mod 16)

The evaluation found that sub-awardees had indeed contributed to the mentioned objectives, as they were located among and provided services to vulnerable communities. The sub-awardees proved to have a staff composition and service-delivery mechanism that served women, youth, children,

persons with disabilities, and minority groups in different districts of the country. Through the analysis of 13 beneficiary lists, the evaluation team found that the majority of sub-awardees served an average of 40-50% female beneficiaries. One sub-awardee’s beneficiaries were all women, while two others had less than 30% women in their beneficiary pool. One of the organizations targeted youth only (average age 24) and seven others had youth among their beneficiaries.

BALADI-CL, in consultation with USAID/Lebanon, made significant solicitation efforts to ensure the selection of sub-awardees capable of serving affected communities. BALADI-CL’s team carried out the awarding process while promoting interaction and responsiveness with the sub-awardees, particularly in terms of ensuring proposals were informed by a needs assessment when possible (applicable for 6 of the 10 NGOs interviewed), developing the proposal, and closely accompanying the implementation process. FGD participants also noted that the projects were very relevant to their needs or the needs of their community and that they would be willing to participate again in similar activities to enhance their skills and knowledge.

“The objective of the project centered around young people who wanted to leave Lebanon because of their economic situation, especially in the locations I talked about. They can barely continue their education. So, we did a context analysis. The result was the need for training on search engine and user interface.”

— Sub-awardee staff

“The idea of the project was based on the needs of our area. We conduct a needs assessment on an annual basis. Based on the results, we determine challenges and what the community looks for.”

— Sub-awardee staff

Among the shortcomings of the awarding process, however, is the fact that a major portion of the vulnerable groups and communities supported by NGOs/FBOs in different Lebanese districts did not apply to BALADI-CL (as per interviews with BALADI-CL and USAID staff). This was particularly evident in the fact that the pool of applications included a majority of Christian or non-sectarian organizations, with only three Muslim organizations, two of which withdrew early on in the process. This resulted in a modest coverage of vulnerable Muslim communities’ critical needs.¹⁴ Another major shortcoming facing BALADI-CL’s capacity to comprehensively address nation-wide critical community needs lies in the fact that the RFCA awards were limited by small funds, types, and short-term implementation. Thus, the contribution of BALADI-CL to community support was overwhelmed by disproportional needs amid fast-deteriorating social and economic conditions in the country.

¹⁴ Projects have disproportionately awarded Christian FBOs/NGOs (14 of the 19 or 74%) while including only one Muslim minority FBO (Alawites) and five NGOs that are mostly Christian-led. Major Muslim FBOs (Shia and Sunni) were not included. This is a fact that challenges relevance assumptions by limited coverage and short-term project that do not respond to the “all of Lebanon” objective (see modifications 15 and 16). Despite being majority-Christian FBOs operating in Christian majority districts, they indiscriminately served diverse sectarian populations, including Muslims (Lebanese and Syrians). Interviews with several Christian FBOs indicated that their beneficiaries were of mixed nationalities and religious groups, including Syrian refugees and foreign domestic workers. CL’s monitoring reports, however, did not identify the religious compositions of beneficiaries.

Q.1.3 How did projects adapt as community needs changed?

Finding 1.3: BALADI-CL was found to be adaptive and flexible. It adopted various modifications to accommodate changing community needs within short periods of time.

BALADI-CL adopted various modifications in order to accommodate changing community needs. The RFCA was, in itself, a modification of the RFMA intended to respond to emerging economic hardships facing communities. In its short two-year lifetime, and despite its limited funds compared to the massive needs, BALADI-CL/RFCA evolved into three phases amid turbulent socio-economic, emergency, and pandemic conditions.

“I am proud that we helped all applicants to fine-tune the projects and make them more relevant to the scope of BALADI; we also helped them adapt to COVID. Some of the shortlisted had to remove a section of the project because it doesn’t fall under scope of USAID.”

— BALADI-CL staff

RFCA I, RFCA II, and RFCA-BER each attempted, in its own terms, to address particular emerging community needs. Ultimately, they were all developed and implemented successfully along 19 sub-awardees while demonstrating BALADI-CL’s adaptive flexibility within a short period of time. The selection of the sub-awardees and their programming also aimed to address fast-changing community needs. Sub-awardees’ fast responsiveness and interaction with BALADI-CL stems from the high stakes in the benefits being received and demonstrated by the in-kind contribution made to achieve objectives. This partnership modality contributed to BALADI-CL’s fast adaptation to serve changing community needs.

MANAGEMENT EFFECTIVENESS (RFCA)

Q2.1 To what extent did BALADI-CL/RFCA effectively manage material and human resources?

Finding 2.1.1: BALADI-CL managed the projects well while abiding by implementation requirements, though they encountered significant challenges and management risks as a result of their small team, high staff turnover, and poor institutionalization of management practices and reporting.

The most serious concern is that CL lacked technical specialization in the projects being implemented.¹⁵ CL is a charitable organization that targets marginalized communities across more than 25 locations in Lebanon. It is neither a development organization nor equipped to respond to emergency and disasters. At the same time, the sub-awarded projects were technically diverse and relatively complex and had a wide variety of objectives. BALADI-CL lacked the institutional requirements to manage the types of projects being implemented.

Still, this deficiency in technical specialization was largely alleviated by the experience and knowledge that the BALADI-CL team had gained from managing RFMA sub-awards earlier. For example, CL’s

¹⁵ See also 2020 Evaluation: [PA00X4S3.pdf \(resiliencelinks.org\)](#)

procurement department proved timely for the RFCA, as it established internal procedures in line with international standards while serving RFMA and other CL projects.

An important aspect that further facilitated the management of RFCA sub-awards rested in the nature of the projects being implemented. Most projects required modest-size budgets and the purchase and installation of equipment. Hence, beyond consultation and procurement tasks, the management of purchasing and installation were transferred to a contracted third party. BALADI-CL's management focused more on following up on deliverables and receiving progress reports from sub-awardees.

Nevertheless, the small-sized BALADI-CL team, the lack of handover and documentation of learning, and the heavy reliance on a single grant manager to coordinate the different tasks heightened the project management risks. This, in turn, added additional pressure to communicating with sub-awardees about the progress being achieved.

Human resources were particularly challenged by anticipating the conclusion of BALADI-CL, then learning it had been extended and modified under RFCAs. Modifications prolonged the Activity for a few months only, and, as reported by some BALADI CL staff, their colleagues felt the need to start seeking employment opportunities elsewhere. According to interviews with BALADI CL staff, CL attempted to retain some by allocating them to other projects closer to the closure date of the Activity. Several staff members were also multitasking in order to attain the objectives before the close-out.

Finding 2.1.2: Sub-awardees overall had positive experiences with the BALADI-CL team in terms of information sharing, coordination, communication, and flexibility. Respondents noted, however, that there was room for improvement in processes related to the selection of contractors and for more coordination at the outset and close-out.

Interviewed sub-awardee staff were all very approving of BALADI-CL. They described the BALADI-CL team as extremely helpful and supportive, and communication with them as well channeled and participatory. While they voiced no complaints regarding the awarding process, most said they would have liked to receive more equipment or to have had the opportunity to expand the benefits beyond BALADI's timeframe. There were individual complaints from three organizations, with staff saying they had received insufficient communication and coordination from BALADI-CL at the start of the project, during the installation of equipment, and towards the end.

Q2.2. To what extent did the Activity comply with quality assurance requirements, procurement procedures, and environmental measures?

Finding 2.2.1: BALADI-CL succeeded in delivering intended outputs despite internal and external challenges to the procurement and installation of equipment and rehabilitation of facilities. For provisions beyond equipment purchase and installation and facility rehabilitation, quality assurance in project delivery was undermined.

BALADI-CL's management faced some challenges that hindered their full compliance with quality-assurance requirements. These challenges include (i) the wide topical and sectoral diversity of the projects implemented, (ii) the limited number of staff handling key day-to-day management functions, (iii) the lack of action to acquire the needed technical knowledge for adequate managerial support and oversight, and (iv) the pressure to achieve implementation in a short period of time. This was particularly evident in the fact that RFCA required close assistance to the sub-awardees in developing project concepts through a single grants manager acting as a focal point for all sub-awardees and supported by a single M&E coordinator (not specialized in management or coordination). The grants manager needed to coordinate the implementation of 19 different types of projects in a short period of time and a challenging environment. Though stretched, these two staff members still visited as many of the projects as possible to monitor quality, provide direct support

to sub-awardees, and validate progress reports. One of them said that more monitoring was needed to ensure an M&E quality as good as the one achieved in RFMA work earlier.

BALADI-CL's management team lacked knowledge in the type of equipment and training to be provided and relied on consultants for advice and procurement. This did not sit well with all sub-awardees, with some saying they wished BALADI-CL had consulted with them closely when identifying providers, given their past experience in the market. One sub-awardee that works in a field in which BALADI-CL has no vast experience said the trainer they had recruited to work with him was not a good fit nor was able to provide quality training, which resulted in a subpar deliverable. There were also delays in identifying a replacement afterwards.

What worked in favor of BALADI-CL were the small-sized and equipment-focused projects that transferred much of the work into a centralized procurement procedure. The establishment of a procurement department during RFMA contributed significantly to ensuring that the tender process is robust and compliant with USAID standards. The load was however shared by two staff members only, who at times were overwhelmed by the quantity and diversity of the equipment, the endless back-and-forth communication with some NGOs to gather detailed specifications, and the number of issues that needed to be addressed with suppliers when equipment needed replacement. Adding to that, delays in implementation were primarily due to exogenous economic conditions, the limited availability of goods in the market, global shipping problems, and price fluctuations.

Finding 2.2.2: Compliance with environmental measures within RFCA was closely guided by USAID, outsourced, and not sufficiently planned prior to awards, which prevented full compliance.

The evaluation team found that the management of environmental reporting was not consistent throughout the RFCA, primarily because BALADI-CL lacked the expertise and know-how to manage the environmental component of the Activity, as revealed during interviews with CL staff. This is in part due to (i) end of contract of a key partner that supported BALADI-CL in the delivery of this requirement under RFMA, and (ii) the limited experience of BALADI-CL's staff, who despite their best efforts to ensure compliance did not have sufficient knowledge and capacity to review the reports submitted by this partner's successor for accuracy and relevance.

USAID staff tried to fill the gaps by following more closely the implementation of Environmental Review and Assessment Checklists (ERAC) for each of the projects, especially those with construction works. Feedback was provided in detail to BALADI-CL and training was provided to the staff to increase capacity of the BALADI team to comply with the requirements.

“The project already provided us with the machines for composting, and we will start using them once our engineer deals with the basic issues. We are fine environmentally-wise, our water has been tested for safety measures. Our garbage is separated.”

—Sub-awardee staff

The investments from both sides were however not sufficient to compensate for the delays and inaccuracies in the ERACs. These issues resulted in challenges for six of the 19 ERACs, as the original budget for equipment and program costs was unable to reallocate funds to accommodate ERAC requirements. Actions were assigned to BALADI-CL's staff when they should have been assigned to the sub-awardees, and irrelevant measures were recommended for equipment that were not purchased. Therefore, some projects that were implemented with safety or environmental requirements were satisfactory, but at the financial expense of the sub-awardee, or simply did not comply with environmental requirements.

Q2.3 How did BALADI-CL/RFCA’s management adapt when the Activity context changed in 2020, and what mechanisms and procedures most supported rapid Activity adjustment?

Finding 2.3: BALADI-CL adapted well to emerging and unforeseen circumstances, as it benefitted from past RFMA management experiences, centralized operation (procurement), and heightened sub-awardee benefits, despite lack of expertise in the sectors funded.

As discussed earlier, BALADI-CL’s management of RFCA work benefitted significantly from CL’s past experience with RFMA work. The transfer of knowledge (ToK) improved BALADI-CL’s management’s capacity in terms of purchasing and installing equipment and efficiently adapting M&E systems to a new phase. A newly-established procurement department also supported rapid adaptation. Management was able to deliver the projects despite unforeseen challenges and multiple risks, including currency devaluation and fluctuation, difficulties in importing products, extended delays in delivering equipment, and internal challenges related to high staff turnover at various management levels.

The nature of the projects being implemented though did not require much management beyond small-scale facility rehabilitation and purchase and installation of equipment. This also minimized centralized-management difficulties in contrast to projects that required capacity building in different localities or sectors.

Another major factor that facilitated RFCA management was the fact that the stakes in project implementation were to the benefit of the sub-awardees. Rehabilitation work and equipment installation at sub-awardees’ facilities were essential for the working functions or the presumption of activities, a matter that elevated cooperation and responsive engagement between the management team and the sub-awardees, particularly in application and during installation stages.

All the above factors and procedures helped BALADI-CL’s management adapt to the contextual changes that occurred as of 2020.

Q2.4 To what extent did BALADI-CL/RFCA adhere to its Communication and Outreach Plan and generate awareness of the Activity, its results, and USAID/Lebanon?

Finding 2.4: All projects visited by the evaluation team were found to be adhering to USAID’s branding requirements (USAID logo is displayed on all equipment and visible to onlookers). BALADI-CL and sub-awardees communicated project results to direct beneficiaries. It is premature to assess the extent of results communication to a wider audience.

Interviews with sub-awardee staff showed that three projects held small launch events at the community level with limited attendance from project staff and potential beneficiaries. Five organizations published posts on social media that recognized USAID’s contribution to these three projects. CL also posted on its website about an event held to celebrate the signing of MoUs with 11 FBOs and described the scope and reach of the projects. All sites visited by the evaluation team featured USAID banners and visible sponsorship. Communication and outreach plans were limited by the nature of the projects implemented (which responded to emergency and were centered around equipment provision and renovations) and their relatively small number of beneficiaries (estimated at 3,570 direct beneficiaries). It remains premature to assess the extent to which BALADI-CL’s RFCA projects are aligned with the original communication and outreach plan as formulated in their original proposals. By June 2022, most sub-awards had only completed facility rehabilitation or equipment installation. Relevant post-rehabilitation and equipment installation services are now in the process of being launched. Thus, the sub-awardees did not have sufficient time to communicate benefits to a wider audience.

IMPLEMENTATION EFFECTIVENESS (RFCA)

Q3.1 To what extent did BALADI-CL/RFCA achieve its goals and objectives?

Finding 3.1: BALADI-CL/RFCA has achieved its immediate objectives and has overcome various challenges, most significantly through providing equipment and renovating facilities, and to a lesser extent through human-resource development and capacity building. Long-term goals and objectives await future evaluations.

A review of BALADI-CL's last three quarterly progress reports shows that all RFCA projects were satisfactorily implemented. Most indicator targets were met by Q1 FY2022 with the exception of Indicator 3.2's targets on sustainability of projects, and the targets of the indicator related to training of youth (Annex 13). BALADI-CL explained that sustainability could be assessed once handover has been completed for all projects in Q2. As for youth, BALADI-CL said that the target was originally too high, and RFCA did not require that all projects target youth.

The evaluation team did not observe any serious challenges facing equipment installation or facility rehabilitation besides delays in procuring equipment or requests for additional programming support, which were beyond the control of BALADI-CL or not within its scope of work. The predominantly equipment-based sub-awards were relatively easy to implement, as they were completely handled by BALADI-CL's procurement department and coordinated by the grants manager, including bidding, purchasing, and installation.

Whenever a training component was attached to sub-awards, sub-awardees managed to deliver their training and capacity-building sessions successfully. The evaluation team did not see any cancellations of or major changes to training sessions beyond occasional postponements, minor revisions of plans, change of trainees, and lack of full participation.

RFCA-project implementation was occasionally hindered by heightened expectations in the sub-awards' proposal phase. This was the case whenever sub-awards promised to achieve immediate outcomes, such as ensuring the employment, internship, or empowerment of trainees. As reported by sub-awardee staff, projects that entailed capacity building encountered additional difficulties, such as curriculum development, training delivery, participation, and/or managing participant expectations.

Exogenous factors were sometimes responsible for disrupting participation in capacity-building activities, such as gas prices/transportation costs. The economic crisis also hindered the ability of securing employment for the trainees. These challenges caused some delays in the procurement process as well, including throughout the purchase of equipment. (For a detailed list of challenges, see Annex 10).

Still, the cumulative contributions of the various sub-awards to BALADI-CL's ultimate goals and objectives remain below the original expectations set in Mod 16, i.e., to achieve "long-term collaboration between municipalities or unions, NGOs, FBOs, CBOs, and private sector entities to implement and manage community projects and deliver services." A more accurate assessment can be performed in the future once additional evaluations have been conducted that can link the different projects' outputs to the overall BALADI-CL/RFCA outcomes.

Q3.2 What factors (endogenous or exogenous) contributed to the achievement or non-achievement of results?

Finding 3.2: Among the factors that contributed to the achievement of results were (i) BALADI-CL's retention of key staff and experience acquired from the previous RFMA work, (ii) USAID/Lebanon's technical support and close follow-up, and (iii) sub-awardees' experience in their respective communities. However, BALADI-CL's implementation was negatively affected by:

- BALADI-CL's sub-granting approach that removed the sub-awardees from a comprehensive partnership.
- High staff turnover at BALADI-CL and change in management at USAID/Lebanon.
- Unclear selection criteria at the start of RFCA.
- Sub-awardees' lack of experience in procurement and proposal writing.
- Contextual governance challenges in Lebanon, including the economic, energy, and health crises.

Factors that contributed to the achievement of BALADI-CL/RFCA are many. First, the sub-awardees held a significant stake in the success of the Activity and thus actively cooperated to facilitate implementation. Second, BALADI-CL's implementation of the RFCA work was aided by the experience they gained from the previous RFMA work. Third, USAID/Lebanon's close follow-up with BALADI-CL's team allowed for a timely implementation, ensuring compliance, troubleshooting and quality reporting. Fourth, CL managed to retain some of the BALADI-CL staff despite the approaching end date of the Activity (though these staff were assigned to multiple projects each and had to multitask).

RFCA-project implementation faced exogenous and endogenous challenges. Exogenous challenges included the country's socio-economic crisis and collapsing institutions (specifically the public electricity utility, Electricité du Liban), all of which undermined timely implementation and the sustainability of operations. As a result, the sub-awardees had to rely on their own diesel-fuel generators to run their operations (training, workshops, etc.), which proved costly and jeopardized the continuity of project implementation. Other external factors included poor government facilitation and support to essential economic activities, such as providing incentives and seeking export markets for local agricultural products. The COVID-19 lockdowns were also among the external factors responsible for delays in implementation.

As for endogenous challenges, BALADI-CL's sub-granting approach removed the sub-awardees from a comprehensive partnership, which made their contribution and responsibilities in project implementation limited. This was not included in the original design of the RFCA. Furthermore, the in-kind nature of BALADI-CL/RFCA heightened the stakes in terms of partnership and ownership of the projects implemented, which caused overlapping of the responsibilities each party had. For example, BALADI-CL's team became overly involved in drafting proposals for sub-awardees while, at the same time, making final selections alongside USAID/Lebanon. As such, sub-awardees receiving equipment appeared more like beneficiaries than implementers, dealing with BALADI-CL as a donor rather than a partner (according to BALADI CL staff). Thus, the sub-awardees were mostly removed from a comprehensive partnership while CL entirely took over implementation responsibilities. These issues were evident in several disagreements that emerged early on in RFCA's selection process.

Other endogenous challenges to implementation included the high staff turnover at BALADI-CL, especially the one caused by the approaching end date of the Activity, with staff seeking more permanent employment elsewhere (For a detailed list of challenges, see Annex 10). Moreover, the AOR for BALADI-CL at USAID/Lebanon changed during RFCA implementation.

Q3.3 What evidence is there that BALADI-CL/RFCA contributed to improved public service delivery in local communities (and for women and youth in particular)?

Finding 3.3: Beneficiary organizations that received equipment and facility-renovation services are now fully operational and capable of serving their communities.

Preliminary evidence indicates that beneficiary FBOs/NGOs have had their functions improved and are now able to effectively serve the local communities (women and youth in particular). These sub-awardees are now capable of training women and youth, building their capacities, and providing them with critical services. For instance, three beneficiaries are now fully equipped, operational, and ready to provide women in their respective communities with vocational skills to build their capacities, generate income, and support their small businesses. Equipped training facilities are capable of catering to hundreds of local women, developing the skills they need to enhance their employability and business ventures. These NGOs/FBOs offer services that complement and support BALADI-CL's objective of delivering "public-services" targeting women and youth beneficiaries. Other organizations have already generated results in terms of improving service delivery to the community. For instance, one organization operates a school that is now equipped with solar panels, an important shift towards renewable energy and less reliance on diesel fuel for generators. The resulting cost savings help counter the school's declining income and increasing operation costs.

Q3.4 To what extent were BALADI-CL/RFCA's results experienced by communities equitably? Were women, youth, and marginalized groups able to access/participate in activities and experience results? What were the barriers (if any) that hindered their participation, and how were these barriers addressed?

Finding 3.4: RFCA projects benefitted women, youth, children, minorities, and people with special needs, allowing them to access the organizations and participate in decision making. However, BALADI-CL failed to reach NGOs/FBOs with certain religious affiliations in certain regions through solicitation.

BALADI-CL succeeded in soliciting applications from different regional communities, sub-awarding 19 FBOs/NGOs to receive support in different areas, including agribusiness, education, vocational training, special needs, and psychosocial support. These organizations were provided different types of support, mainly facility rehabilitation and equipment installation (16 out of 19, or 85%). The remaining three received capacity-building/training support. These rehabilitation and equipment awards are intended to serve mostly women, youth, children, and marginalized groups, including those with special needs. While the evaluation team did not have enough time to interview beneficiaries of these facilities, we can confirm that they are accessible to the community at large.

The team also noted that mostly Christians benefited from RFCA activities. This is because the majority of the solicited sub-awardees were Christian FBOs/NGOs (14 out of 19, or 74%) and none were Shia or Sunni. Interventions were concentrated in Christian-majority districts (Annex 14) and did not target CSOs in Muslim-majority areas in the South, Bekaa, and Akkar. This indicates that BALADI-CL did not achieve equity in service delivery to different religious denominations and geographic areas despite their efforts, and USAID's requirement, to reach out to organizations of different religious affiliations even if these do not fully meet the institutional capacity requirements. One possible reason Muslim-affiliated organizations did not apply to the RFCA is the fact that the project is led by a Christian FBO (CL). Thus, equity in service delivery across religions and regions of the country appears not to have been achieved (Annex15) .

Q3.5 To what extent did BALADI-CL/RFCA develop, implement, and close the awarded projects in a participatory, gender-sensitive and inclusive way?

Finding 3.5: Most RFCA projects were developed with the active participation of the sub-awardees. Yet, their closing was not often participatory, and most did not have a follow-up plan.

As reported by all interviewed sub-awardee staff and three BALADI-CL staff, all RFCA projects were developed with the active participation of the sub-awardees in terms of drafting proposals and selecting equipment. However, sub-awardees were often not included in project close-out processes, and most projects did not have a follow-up plan involving the sub-awardees, as this was considered beyond the scope of the Activity. In many instances, the sub-awardees were only notified about project closures and were not provided with feedback or ways to connect with other projects. This is despite the fact that operation sustainable plans emphasized the follow-up requirements but were not properly monitored, and NGO proposals included plan for sustainability and responsibilities which were not being followed up by the IP as observed by the evaluation team.

SUSTAINABILITY (RFCA & RFMA)

Question 4.1: How did BALADI-CL plan for sustainability/long-term results at the (a) NGO/FBO and (b) municipal level? + How did the BALADI-CL Activity leverage institutional factors, community groups/members (including women and youth), enterprises, and other elements to maximize the likelihood of sustained results?

Finding 4.1.a (RFCA): Respondents noted that the most critical factors influencing sustainability were equipment and in-kind contributions/funds.

In RFCA activities, BALADI-CL's plan for sustainability was embedded in every proposal developed by the awardee. Another notable aspect of sustainability is the fact that the sub-awards furnished most NGOs/FBOs with essential equipment for programmatic activities and the organizations' work. Sub-awardees provided in-kind contributions whenever possible in order to ensure the installation and proper use of equipment, thus demonstrating ownership and stake in preserving the long-term use of equipment. This demonstrates the importance of partnership and in-kind contributions in making RFCA projects sustainable.

“Every applicant has a sustainability plan in the application, and we follow up on issues related to sustainability. Every month, we receive a progress report from the granters to the reporting and compliance officer and when she left, I received them and translate them into the quarterly reports.”

—BALADI-CL Staff

Most sub-awardee respondents said they were currently seeking partnerships with new NGOs, donors, and municipalities. They are also trying to secure donations to buy additional equipment and provide training and/or planning to extend their services to paying customers or patients to expand their market reach. The income generated from the activities is expected to cover the projects' operating costs.

There are two caveats here, however. First, it is premature to assess the sustainability of all sub-awarded projects at the moment, given that most have only been recently equipped and programmatic activities have not been launched yet. Second, exogenous factors, such as the rising diesel-fuel prices, undermine the organizations' ability to continue operations despite the availability of equipment.

Finding 4.1.b (RFMA): Community needs are a critical reason for sustaining projects. Unfortunately, partner municipalities under RMFA did not utilize the original business-development plans that were developed by experts recruited by BALADI-CL and did not mainstream them into the implemented projects.

The initial sustainability and business-development plans that were developed by experts recruited by BALADI-CL were embedded in project proposals at the municipal level.

There were significant in-kind investments made by municipalities that demonstrated ownership and important stake in sustaining the activities. This supports previous observations made in the 2020 evaluation, which noted “positive indications pointing towards sustainability of the services and economic benefits... Mayors and other respondents cited satisfaction with the projects. High usage rates and strong demand suggests that users may generate pressure to maintain the facilities, and by association, the jobs they created.¹⁶ Notably, sports facilities and hiking trails are being used, the tourist cabins are heavily booked, and the agri-business processing and cold storage units are also in use. Cost savings from solar power projects are greatly appreciated in the communities. Facility managers and municipal leaders expressed desire to expand some facilities, such as the cold storage facility and the tourist cabins, which suggests there is excess demand. As noted in the Findings, some of the completed projects are generating fees or other revenues but hard data was not available because the projects have not been in operation long enough. Sustainability of increased local council capacity and improved governance are not very relevant, as little was done towards these outcomes.”¹⁷

Site visits conducted by the evaluation team attest to previous evaluation notes about associating community needs and local investments with sustaining project services. During interviews, however, the team noticed that focal points at municipalities were hardly aware of the presence of sustainability plans. There was no evident mainstreaming of these plans within the implemented projects.

Q4.2 What are the major challenges encountered in maintaining the gains achieved in BALADI-CL at the (a) NGO/FBO and (b) municipal level?

Finding 4.2.a (RFCA): The economic crisis and the failure of the Lebanese state are among the major challenges undermining the gains achieved by RFCA.

At the NGO/FBO level, the major challenge to sustainability is cost-efficiency. All projects that seek to respond to urgent community needs are faced with challenges caused by the ongoing economic crisis in the country, especially the rising cost of fuel and electricity, which is hindering the sustainability of operations. As such, external support will continue to be required to sustain the gains achieved. This undermines the future scalability and/or replicability of most RFCA projects.

There is a whole set of challenges that may threaten project sustainability, but they are mostly linked to exogenous variables associated with failing state institutions (utilities, facilitating export, lack of credit, banking capital control, currency devaluation, etc.). As for endogenous factors, the most important one is the lack of a follow-up plan for the BALADI-CL/RFCA activity and the lack of linkages with other USAID-supported projects, which keeps the RFCA projects isolated. This affects

¹⁶ The evaluation team confirmed through site visits and KIIs the creation of one job in the first town, two jobs in the second town, and six job in the third town. No full time job was created in the fourth town. Remuneration remained however quite low and difficult to sustain.

¹⁷ Final Performance Evaluation, Final Report, February 2020, Page 31.

USAID/Lebanon’s ability to examine how its local-development projects will be maintained and whether or not they will continue to be oriented towards serving community needs. (For a detailed list of challenges, see Annex 10).

It is worth mentioning though that these RFCA sub-awards were provided in a rushed manner to respond to urgent community needs following the Beirut port blast. Therefore, sustainability expectations are moderated in favor of serving the immediate needs of communities.

Finding 4.2.b (RFMA): Challenges to sustaining municipal projects are mostly linked to exogenous variables, such as the economic crisis, the high fuel prices, the poor state enabling environment, and the continuously changing leadership in municipalities. Endogenous factors include the lack of (i) “development will” amongst local leadership, (ii) resource optimization between the different BALADI-CL projects, and (iii) follow-on plans for these projects.

“It is very hard to maintain production with the current fuel problem. Last week we had 3-4 days without electricity because we couldn’t get fuel to function generator. We are going through harsh times now.”

—Sub-awardee staff

Challenges facing municipal projects under RFMA are similar to the ones facing NGO/FBO projects under RFCA. Sustainability concerns include the management and operation costs of projects, as fuel prices continue to rise, and municipal human resources remain unstable. Currency devaluation has placed significant pressure on human resources involved in project management, with a high risk of staff resignation and complete shutdown of projects. Furthermore, the management of projects at the local level remains a topic of concern in terms of how benefits and services are distributed. The evaluation team noted one instance where community benefits may not have been equitably shared or appropriately managed, and complaints were made by community members. There was another instance where municipal leadership was tightly linked to the distribution of benefits in communities, which heightened the centrality of mayors in management and decision making and made sustainability dependent on the political will and intentions of municipal leadership. Similar challenges include the lack of follow-up plans and linkages with other USAID-supported projects. Incentives to sustain the projects are also lacking (revenues, future partnerships, etc.)

Based on the observation of four municipal projects (that were covered by the 2020 evaluation and included in the present evaluation as well to capture the type of sectors and regions served) revealed different types of challenges yielding different risks (Annexes 11 and 12). The evaluation team found a sustainability failure in one of the projects due to unforeseen challenges (economic crisis and new technology). Another project was semi-operational and facing a declining local interest in its sustainability (lack of public and private partnership). The remaining two were operating at high risk (declining revenues and high maintenance cost). Figure 2 shows the challenges that faced RFMA projects since 2015.

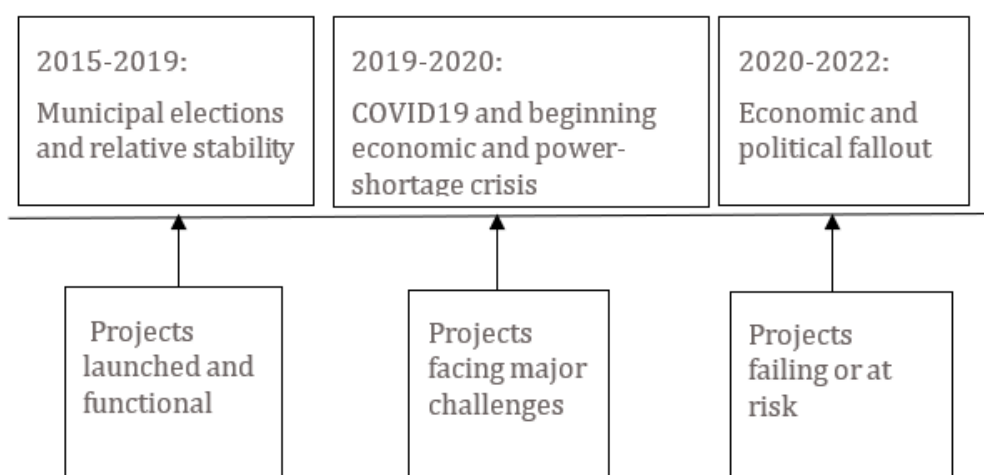


Figure 2: Timeline of RFMA projects facing challenging events

CONCLUSIONS

RFCA RELEVANCE

CONCLUSION I.1: RFCA PROJECTS DID NOT DIRECTLY ALIGN WITH CDCS DOI AND DOII BUT RESPONDED TO URGENT COMMUNITY NEEDS

While the BALADI-CL/RFCA sub-awards were not relevant to the longer-term economic and democratic empowerment objectives of the 2014-2019 CDCS (DOI and DO2), they did respond to the critical and urgent needs of vulnerable populations. In a way, they may have contributed to DOI-Sub-IRI.4.1a: “Percentage of citizens who feel that their concerns are well represented by USG assisted civil society organizations” (Finding I.1). This contribution, however, remained modest compared to the vast community needs, as RFCA sub-awards were constrained by small budgets and limited communal group coverages (Finding I.2).

CONCLUSION I.2: MODEST CONTRIBUTION TO PRESERVATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL IN SOME COMMUNITIES

USAID’s investment in BALADI-CL has contributed—albeit modestly—to strengthening cooperative social responsibility among the most marginalized to preserve the country’s social capital. A more effective investment could have been made had more comprehensive community needs assessments been conducted in order to validate proposed projects and identify possible collaboration opportunities between stakeholders and had a larger number of applicants been targeted prior to the sub-awards.

CONCLUSION I.3: TIMELY PARTNERSHIPS CONTRIBUTED TO INCREASED ADAPTABILITY OF SUB-AWARDEES AND CL

BALADI-CL adapted to Lebanon’s fast-changing environment in short intervals of time despite challenges. Its partnership with NGOs benefitted from a sizable, in-kind cost-share fund that enhanced projects’ resilience and adaptability amid economic and security shocks. The provision of equipment proved timely for and critical to the operation of sub-awardees, which helped achieve a responsive partnership and adaptation to a fast-changing environment (Finding I.3).

CONCLUSION I.4: ENSURED INCLUSIVITY IN PROJECT DESIGN

When designing projects under RFCA, BALADI-CL ensured they were gender-inclusive on all levels of implementation. The same applied to youth and marginalized groups (Finding 3.4). Most sub-

awards had outreach plans for marginalized groups, and these were managed or coordinated by female staff. RFCA's in-kind contribution modality was timely, particularly for purchasing equipment, given the banking crisis and the lack of liquidity.

RFCA EFFECTIVENESS

Management

CONCLUSION 2.1: LACK OF SPECIALIZATION UNDERMINED EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT

BALADI-CL's management lacked the needed specialization to effectively manage an emergency response in different sectors (Finding 2.1.1), which affected its ability to deliver intended outputs. Due to its lack of technical knowledge, BALADI-CL's management demonstrated shortcomings in its handling of the implemented projects that went beyond equipment procurement and provision (Finding 2.2.1, Finding 3.1). This was also reflected in its poor planning and disregard of important environmental specifications (Finding 2.2.2). BALADI-CL put only one (unspecialized) person in charge of coordinating the implementation of all 19 sub-awards (Finding 2.1.1). Fortunately, low-management requirements that allowed for subcontracting third parties to purchase and install equipment through procurement procedures saved the day (Finding 2.2.1 and Finding 2.3).

CONCLUSION 2.2: OVERLAPPING ROLES AFFECTED MANAGEMENT OF SHORT-TERM PROJECTS

BALADI-CL's management team had overlapping roles and responsibilities and were deeply involved in developing proposals and project plans for sub-awardees while, at the same time, participating with USAID/Lebanon in the selection of awards. In addition to undermining fair selection, this made the CL management team responsible for the coordination and implementation of sub-awards. As a result, the sub-awardees became mere beneficiaries rather than actual implementers (Finding 2.1.1).

CONCLUSION 2.3: UNCLEAR EXPECTATIONS UNDERMINED PLANNING AND REPORTING

Overlapping roles at BALADI-CL confused reporting expectations between the three parties involved: USAID/Lebanon, CL, and the sub-awardees (Finding 2.1.1 and Finding 3.2). The management of expectations also suffered as a consequence. The sub-awardees expected a post-equipment partnership to support training and further development (Finding 2.1.2). USAID expected CL to develop projects that adhered to environmental regulations in addition to follow-up plans (Finding 2.2.2).

CONCLUSION 2.4: SHORT-TERM ASSIGNMENTS INCREASED STAFF TURNOVER

Project management was affected by a high staff turnover at CL due to RFCA's short-term contracts and multiple short-term contract modifications, which made staff less enthusiastic/committed and pushed them to leave. In addition, the approaching end date of the BALADI-CL Activity pushed many staff to look for more permanent employment elsewhere (Finding 2.1.1).

CONCLUSION 2.5: SHORT-TERM NATURE OF PROJECTS LIMITED COMMUNICATION AND OUTREACH

Communicating RFCA projects' benefits to the wider community through an outreach plan is limited. Communication efforts consisted mainly of branding work, such as placing the USAID logo on equipment and hanging sponsorship plaques in rehabilitated facilities (Finding 2.4). Only a few sub-awardees recognized USAID's sponsorship of their projects on their websites and social media pages. The evaluation team did not come across any information circulated in targeted communities explaining the projects' benefits. This is most likely because most projects have not become fully operational and are not serving the wider community yet.

Implementation

CONCLUSION 3.1: IMPLEMENTATION FACILITATED BY TRANSFER OF KNOWLEDGE

ToK facilitated the successful implementation of RFCA projects. This is manifested in the efforts that CL made to build the capacity of institutions and the experience it acquired from the previous RFMA projects (Finding 2.3). ToK was instrumental in both the successful management and successful implementation of RFCA projects. All equipment-provision projects have been satisfactorily implemented and are currently operational (Finding 3.3).

CONCLUSION 3.2: PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT AIDED ADAPTATION

ToK allowed BALADI-CL to adapt and efficiently implement the RFCA projects amid a fast-changing and difficult environment (Finding 2.3). The establishment of a procurement department aided by experts in the RMFA phase was instrumental in the implementation of the three RFCA phases. A few factors supported BALADI-CL's adaptation, including USAID/Lebanon's close follow-up regarding project implementation as well as the sub-awardees' relevance to the targeted communities (Finding 3.2).

CONCLUSION 3.3: SUB-AWARDEES HEIGHTENED BENEFITS IN PARTNERSHIP AND FACILITATED IMPLEMENTATION

The stakes that the sub-awardees have in the projects' success and the benefits they gain from them facilitated implementation and partnership with CL (Finding 2.3 and Finding 3.5). This is particularly true for sub-awardees receiving equipment or facility-rehabilitation support that help increase their capacity to deliver services in their respective communities (Finding 3.1).

CONCLUSION 3.4: DESPITE ATTEMPTS TO ACHIEVE INCLUSIVE PARTNERSHIP, EQUITABLE BENEFITS WERE NOT ATTAINED

While BALADI-CL benefited socio-economically marginalized and vulnerable groups as well as women and youth, it failed to reach a comprehensive national sample of communities (Finding 1.2 and Finding 3.4). In a divided sectarian environment, CL being a Christian FBO may have discouraged the participation of certain NGOs/FBOs in the solicitation process. The emergency nature and short-term orientation of the awards prevented BALADI-CL from conducting a more rigorous effort to ensure a comprehensive and equitable national coverage.

RMFA AND RFCA SUSTAINABILITY

CONCLUSION 4.1: RESPONDING TO URGENT COMMUNITY NEEDS SERVES SUSTAINABLE PROJECTS

Pressing community needs are an important reason for sustaining sub-awards' provided services (Finding 4.1.b). BALADI-CL, through RFCA, has equipped relevant FBOs and NGOs with the capacities to serve socio-economically marginalized groups. These organizations are now also in a better position to maintain and expand their services. Thus, there is reason to expect RFCA-supported projects to be sustained over time, as long as the sub-awardees are able to cover their operation and maintenance costs (as well as staffing) (Finding 4.1.a). This is supported by the fact that previous RFMA projects were able to sustain their operations and continue to respond to urgent community needs despite growing challenges.¹⁸

¹⁸ The evaluation teams observed in one of the RFMA projects visited that despite high running costs, the urgent community needs and the qualified and engaged leadership of the municipality head contributed to sustaining the project.

CONCLUSION 4.2: IN-KIND MODALITY INCREASES THE STAKES IN SUSTAINING THE PARTNERSHIP

The in-kind grant modality is one of the key components of project sustainability (Finding 4.1a). This is the case for RFMA projects, where in-kind contributions are significantly high, which increases the stakes in maintaining the projects. In RFMA projects, in-kind contributions, such as land and labor, helped reduce operational costs and preserve activities.

CONCLUSION 4.3: PARTNERSHIP IS SUSTAINED BY LOCAL OWNERSHIP AND HEIGHTENED BENEFITS

Serving the community while getting support through in-kind grants is the essence of a sustainable partnership. In RFCA projects, sub-awardees played the role of beneficiaries rather than that of implementers, which heightened the benefits and stakes in their partnership with CL. In-kind contributions strengthened these FBOs and NGOs' capacity to deliver services. In RFMA awards, project ownership was fully transferred to the municipalities, and the projects were integrated into communities' service networks. Whenever a partnership included the private sector and invited additional donors on board, project sustainability was guaranteed. In this spirit, getting support from the Lebanese diaspora, for example, can contribute to ensuring project sustainability, particularly at the local level. This applies to both RFCA and RFMA.

CONCLUSION 4.4: LACK OF INTER-PROJECT RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION RAISES COST OF PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

Local ownership of projects increases the stakes in preserving and developing a project. Unfortunately, most RFCA and RFMA projects were faced with a significant rise in costs that threatened their sustainability. Reducing costs through the introduction of new technology or the optimization of resources is essential to overcome economic pressure and rising prices. In both RFCA and RFMA projects, there was a lack of resource optimization and a continuous reliance on external support for project sustainability, especially for projects unable of launching income-generating activities. For instance, there are no interlinkages between the different USAID-supported awardees to exchange resources and benefits and optimize operational costs.

CONCLUSION 4.5: LACK OF FOLLOW-UP UNDERMINES INTEREST IN SUSTAINING ACTIVITIES

All implemented RFCA and RFMA projects lack follow-up activities (Finding 3.5). This is despite the presence of follow-up plans in the original proposals (Finding 4.1b). Follow-up actions that include incremental project-development incentives provide important reasons for project sustainability. Lack of follow-up plans has lowered interest in sustaining the activities.

CONCLUSION 4.6: TURBULENT ENVIRONMENT IS SERIOUS THREAT TO SUSTAINABILITY

Many factors undermine the sustainability of BALADI-CL's sub-awards, prime among them are the economic crisis and the ongoing failure of the Lebanese state (Finding 4.2a and Finding 4.2b). Extended blackouts and the continuous reliance on costly diesel fuel to provide electricity for business operation remain the number one threat against project sustainability. High gas prices are also hindering operations by limiting transportation. Other external factors affecting sustainability include the devaluation of the local currency, which reduces the purchasing power and salary values of employees. RFCA, the operation of equipment is costly compared to the returns. In RFMA, currency devaluation affected municipalities' ability to retain employees working on the projects and maintain the originally intended services, such as transportation. In RFMA projects, which were originally formulated with a development logical framework (e.g., ecotourism), the emergency situation facing the community is changing priorities in favor of humanitarian support. At the municipal level, priorities are determined by municipal leadership and sometimes by political interests, hence tying the prospect of projects to the local political will.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Following the onset of the economic crisis in late 2019, Lebanon witnessed fundamental and permanent changes. Then, following its Eurobond default in 2020, the country experienced a total financial meltdown. Institutional collapse and government paralysis deepened the socio-economic crisis and plunged the nation deeper into the abyss. It is premature now to anticipate when the country will start recovering. Thus far, there are only promises for reforms with international anticipation for bailout. Whether they will be attained remains highly unlikely, given the country's growing political disputes and economic paralysis. In the meantime, and as a consequence of failing state institutions, the population appears vulnerable to insecurity and shortages including food, water, and energy. This new environment necessitates strategies that respond to emergencies at the regional and local levels, in anticipation of a long-term and difficult road to recovery.

BALADI-CL has indeed been operating in difficult conditions amid economic and state failures, as well as COVID-19 restrictions. The Activity responded to emergency conditions through 19 RFCA projects, providing small awards to NGOs/FBOs. Fourteen of these projects focused on purchasing and installing equipment. Three included capacity-building components in addition to equipment installation while the remaining two focused explicitly on capacity building. As is evident, RFCA projects were predominantly formulated around the urgent procurement and installation of equipment for a selected pool of sub-awardees that are in a position to serve vulnerable communities. This was an appropriate response that provided urgent and immediate support to people.

Although BALADI was appropriately designed to serve community needs in emergency and responded and adapted well to changing environments, future programming should build on the many experiences and lessons learned from the implementation of the BALADI-CL.

This BALADI-CL endline performance evaluation has the following recommendations for future USAID programming in Lebanon:

ALIGN PROJECT RELEVANCE

RECOMMENDATION 1: USAID/Lebanon should integrate development and emergency activities in future program design. RFMA was designed to achieve development objectives while RFCA was introduced to respond to urgent community needs. RFMA's local community development objectives were negatively implicated by changing priorities amid the economic crisis. RFCA's objectives, on the other hand, were short-term in nature and not linked to the Mission's development objectives on the long run. BALADI-CL would have been more relevant had the IP been able to follow up on sustainable operation plans for local municipal development projects and on the sustainability plans of FBOs and NGOs. The design of sub-awards would have been stronger had it included, in addition to the essential provision of equipment required during emergency (Conclusion I.3 and Conclusion I.4), training and capacity-building components to ensure the continuity of service delivery to communities.

RECOMMENDATION 2: USAID/Lebanon and its implementing partners (IPs) should establish a closer coordination with other existing national or international recovery plans. This strategy is to be carefully formulated in emergency conditions, where state institutions may become relevant to response and recovery, such as the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Internal Security Forces, and the High Relief Commission. Other donors and international organizations may also become stakeholders in offering relief, such as the one provided in the aftermath of the Beirut port explosion. The ability of a US-funded Activity to integrate itself within the wider national response plan helps optimize resources, increase its impact, and elevate the relevance of its interventions. It is true that BALADI-CL attempted to play such a role in its BER phase by attending joint meetings with relief and donor agencies to coordinate the selection of sub-awardees, but it would have been even better to adopt this approach in RFCA 1 and 2.

“One of the lessons learned was that Caritas Baladi needed to do first a needs assessment and orientation for NGO before accepting their proposal.”

—BALADI-CL staff

“Another thing, we recommend that the service providers whom Caritas chose to do a study on the area where they will be providing the service.”

—Sub-awardee staff

RECOMMENDATION 3: USAID/Lebanon should ensure IPs conduct a comprehensive national community needs assessment prior to sub-awards. Conducting a comprehensive national needs assessment will help IPs identify priority needs, foster consortium building between partners, and achieve a more rigorous proposal solicitation phase that ensures a wide and inclusive pool of applicants. The relevance of BALADI-CL/RFCA to community needs was constrained by small and short-term investments as well as limited coverage (Conclusion 1.1). Such limitations necessitate that future proposal solicitation be conducted in a more rigorous approach to ensure a wide and inclusive pool of applicants. The selection of awards can then proceed while taking into consideration the appropriate targeting of beneficiaries and relying on a comprehensive national needs assessment (Conclusion 1.2). The appropriate selection of awardees contributes to the overall effectiveness of the projects. Gender participation in all levels of management, implementation, and benefits ensures inclusivity, which is a critical component for effective project outcome (Conclusion 1.4).

IMPROVE MANAGEMENT

RECOMMENDATION 4: USAID/Lebanon should incorporate further capacity building into project design and ensure IPs target new partners and small businesses for their awards. This will help ensure diversification and aligns with the “locally led development” commitments made by USAID/Lebanon.¹⁹ One of the lessons learned from the BALADI-CL experience is that while the sub-awarded FBOs benefited various communities in Lebanon, they were not specialized in the kind of emergency response required to serve different socio-economic sectors, such as agriculture, solar energy, or special needs (Conclusion 2.1). As such, building their capacities is critical to ensure service delivery and respond to emergencies in different sectors. This can be achieved following a deeper organizational assessment, covering human-resource systems, procurement, financial management, and communication. Based on this assessment, a capacity-development action plan can be developed to support the IPs in improving their performance.

CL has, for example, developed a Livelihood Unit to respond to growing humanitarian-assistance and relief requirements. Thanks to the lessons learned and ToK from the previous RFMA work, BALADI-CL was able to successfully deliver its RFCA projects (Conclusion 3.1) despite the various shortcomings in its management (Conclusions 2.1-2.4).

RECOMMENDATION 5: When contracting an IP for a local development Activity, USAID/Lebanon should select a cross-sectarian NGO or multiple FBOs affiliated with

¹⁹ [USAID/Lebanon Country Development Cooperation Strategy \(CDCS\) - 2014-2020](#)

different sects. This/these organization/s should be specialized in emergency response and able to take on a central role in the solicitation of participation and the implementation of a nation-wide partnership. This will ensure diversity of coverage and specialization in management.²⁰ A mono-sectarian FBO (like CL) is less likely to achieve the participation of entities affiliated with other sects (Conclusion 3.4).

RECOMMENDATION 6: USAID/Lebanon’s selection of an IP for a local development Activity should be based on the latter’s capacity to maintain staff beyond short-term project delivery. The IP should be able to perform a smooth handover of project assets and transfer of learning in key positions to the new project owner(s).

STRENGTHEN IMPLEMENTATION

RECOMMENDATION 7: USAID/Lebanon should advise its IPs to avoid short-term community response projects (6-12 months) and prioritize mid-term projects (12-24 months) instead. This can help stabilize the IPs’ human resources and provides sufficient time to monitor progress and measure outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 8: USAID/Lebanon should maintain BALADI-CL’s implementation practices in future programming and establish clear Terms of Reference with the new IPs to define roles and avoid the overlapping of responsibilities (Conclusion 2.2). One of the key lessons learned from the BALADI-CL experience is that implementation is best facilitated by heightened benefits in the partnership between the IP and the sub-awardee (Conclusion 3.3). In addition, coordination and follow-up between USAID and the IP are instrumental in the successful and timely implementation of projects (Conclusion 3.2).

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE OUTCOMES

RECOMMENDATION 9: USAID/Lebanon should require with a monitoring plan its IPs to budget for follow-up plans and approach ongoing projects with a similar proposition. This will help preserve local interests, sustain long-term partnership, and avoid equipment drop-off. Follow-up through incentivized project-development actions is an important resilience strategy against instability to preserve local interests and sustain partnerships (Conclusion 4.5).

RECOMMENDATION 10: USAID/Lebanon should require its IPs to ensure that projects providing an emergency or disaster response: a) Build partnerships and connections with other projects/donors working in the same space, b) Network with other sub-awardees on the same project, and c) Engage in the broader community that supports Lebanon, such as the diaspora as well as other NGOs and international donors.

BALADI-CL has demonstrated that sustainability is best guaranteed by building a strong community partnership that supports urgent needs (Conclusion 4.1). The in-kind, cost-share project modality heightened the stakes in the partnerships, which improved the projects’ sustainability (Conclusion 4.2 and Conclusion 4.3). However, the emerging challenges were overwhelming and put most projects at risk (Conclusion 4.6).

Under such circumstances, projects’ efficiency is key to their survival and can be best achieved via the optimization of collective resources across different sub-awardees (Conclusion 4.4).

²⁰ Since USAID has also partnered with RMF to implement BALADI, RMF’s upcoming endline performance evaluation will help assess the ability of multiple IPs to achieve national coverage under one Activity.

During turbulent times, the Lebanese diaspora has proven to be an active stakeholder in safeguarding local development and emergency responses. Therefore, it is crucial to encourage and support projects connected to other donors and partners, such as the Lebanese diaspora.

RECOMMENDATION 11: USAID/Lebanon should design its Activities as to include PPP components that support sub-awards that aim to respond to local community needs.

The participation of the private sector contributes to the mutual and long-term benefits of communities as well as to the nexus of emergency and development. Extending partnerships to the widest possible pool of stakeholders to include different donors and organizations (local and international) is important to ensure the projects' resilience. And most critical to local sustainability is the participation of the private sector, whose interest can contribute to mutual and long-term benefits (Conclusion 4.3).

ANNEXES

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ANNEX I: SCOPE OF WORK



BALADI-CL Endline
Evaluation SOW.doc

ANNEX 2: EVALUATION METHODS AND LIMITATIONS

EVALUATION METHODS

This evaluation utilized a multi-method approach to develop evidence-based findings, and draw objective conclusions. Evaluation approach relied on conducting document reviews and collecting data from semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and Site Visits (SVs) in order to compile and analyze information toward findings.

The ET applied purposive sampling to select 10 RFCA and 4 RFMA projects based on findings from the previous evaluation, progress reports and with the objective to cover all sectors and diverse locations. In total, 21 KIIs were conducted with USAID staff, IP staff, heads or members of municipalities and project or site managers, The ET visited 4 out of the 19 CSOs and NGOs and 4 out of the 23 RFMA projects and completed respectively 4 and 1 FGDs in those sites. In all, the ET interviewed 23 males and 21 females ([Table 1](#) and [Table 2](#)). The sampling and data collection were carried out as follow:

Document Review: examined all documents related to activities performed after the Final Evaluation of February 2020. These documents include Theory of Change (ToC) iterations, quarterly progress reports and final evaluation reports, among others. The ET continued to review project documents iteratively throughout the evaluation process, as needed. Primary data collection yielded access to additional documents relevant to the evaluation, which was then incorporated into the iterative document review. Documents have been provided by USAID and CL during the evaluation design phase. All referenced and analyzed documents are listed in Annex 4.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): The team conducted in-depth, semi-structured KIIs with key stakeholders, including USAID and BALADI CL staff. These interviews have been carried out virtually. The ET selected respondents purposively in consultation with the program team and to include staff members who have been involved in program strategy, design, and/or implementation. These individuals included relevant points of contact; Agreement Officer's Representatives; and CL admin and MEL staff, including staff who collect, verify, store, analyze, and report data. Some KIIs were conducted in person when was possible based on the preference of the respondent(s), and the preference of the interviewer(s).

KIIs were conducted with RFCA sub-awardees' staff and relevant stakeholders. The team evaluate ten out of 19 sub-awardees. Their selection ensured representation from different RFCA phases (RFCA I, II, and BER) and took into account different targeted districts of the country and diverse types of projects.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): The ET conducted FGDs with BALADI CL beneficiaries, selected purposively from different projects. Four out of the sampled ten sub-awardees were selected to ensure the participation of women, youth, and marginalized groups. The selection of project beneficiaries included districts coverage, type of projects, and target groups and randomized to the extent possible. This included selecting beneficiaries from diverse backgrounds and disaggregating FGDs by sex (when possible), in addition to holding the FGDs in single or sex-disaggregated spaces, while making sure the facilitator is the same sex as participants.

The ET conducted five FGDs with RFCA and RFMA sub-awardees (further discussed in next paragraph).

Site Visits (SVs) to RFCA and RFMA sub-awardees: The ET examined selected projects and collected data from the field for visual observations. This was particularly the case to observe project continuity and sustainability after project closure. The SVs were coordinated with the sub-awardees' project focal persons. The team visited four RFMA and four RFCA sites to observe the sustainability of the project and reflect from the field on prospects and challenges for future

programming. The selection of these SVs was based on previous evaluations, district coverage, type of projects, and target groups.

TABLE 1: RFCA Data Collection Activities

NGO / FBO Name	District	RFCA	KIIs	Site visit	FGD
[redacted]	Zgharta	1	1	1	1
[redacted]	Keserwan	1	1		
[redacted]	Sour	1	1		1
[redacted]	Tripoli	2	1	1	1
[redacted]	Chouf	2	1	1	1
[redacted]	Metn	2	1		
[redacted]	Keserwan	2	1		
[redacted]	Metn	2	1	1	
[redacted]	Beirut	BER	1		
[redacted]	Beirut	BER	1		
Total Male			9		5
Total Female			10		10
Total data collection activity			10	4	4

TABLE 2: RFMA Data Collection Activities

Municipality/ Union	District	Site visit	FGD	KII
[redacted]	Baalbek	1	1	1
[redacted]	Baabda	1		1
[redacted]	Metn	1		1
[redacted]	Aley	1		1
Total Male			1	4
Total Female			5	0
Total data collection activity		4	1	4

DATA ANALYSIS

The data analysis was guided by the evaluation questions. The ET followed a rigorous procedure for data cleaning, coding, inter-coder reliability checks, and quality assurance. With a “start list” of codes

based on a literature review, the team expanded, revised, and adjusted this list as data are collected and analyzed.

The ET disaggregated the data across key variables, such as respondent category, gender, sub-awardee and location. After the ET completed preliminary analysis for these evaluation questions, they came together for three internal data analysis and interpretation sessions (DAIS) to share emerging themes and patterns, and develop finding statements for each of the evaluation questions. Following these sessions, the ET presented the preliminary findings to USAID and BALADI-CL teams during two separate online validation sessions. Through this process, the ET validated findings.

GENDER AND SOCIAL ANALYSIS

This evaluation addressed the gender aspect as a crosscutting element in all activities, showing to what extent BALADI-CL/RFCA has adhered to USAID's gender integration requirements. Consistent with the USAID Evaluation Policy, and recognizing that the effects of integration and the success of the Program might vary across gender, the ET applied a gender perspective and ensured that research activities included female study participants. The MEPL Gender, Youth and Inclusion Learning Officer helped the ET ensure compliance and gender sensitivity of the data collection protocols and tools, as well as other deliverables. A key component of the ET's analysis was its capturing of gender-based findings and conclusions whether they specifically benefit (or do not benefit) women or men. The KIs and FGDs included questions to assess the extent to which gender has been integrated into BALADI CL.

Participant-level data were disaggregated by sex, when feasible. In order to capture different perspectives to the extent possible, FGDs was disaggregated by age and gender and held in sex-segregated spaces, when feasible. The ET analyzed how gender issues have been addressed both in the initial design of the Program and in implementation. More specifically, the ET assessed the following:

- How women were involved in the supported communities.
- The extent to which women actively participated in the identification and the implementation of the grant-funded community projects.
- Whether and how successfully women were encouraged to take on leadership roles in the projects.
- What aspects of the program demonstrate women's sustainable participation beyond the life of the Program.

DATA QUALITY CONTROL AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The data-collection teams uploaded the collected data to OneDrive on a daily basis. The ET cleaned and analyzed these incoming data and flagged any recurring data or upload errors for the data-collection teams so that these issues were addressed on a timely basis and errors minimized.

Data collection and management adhered to the protection and confidentiality of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) as follows:

- The team administered informant consent forms prior to conducting recorded interviews, ensuring respondents are aware of the purpose of the study and their participation options (see below discussion and Annex 2: Informed Consent Form).
- All interview recordings and notes were electronically stored in a password-protected and encrypted shared folder.
- The dataset and shared folder were stored in EnCompass's OneDrive account, which is highly secured and protected by U.S. standards. Only team members had access to the project password-protected folder.
- Team members immediately shredded any documents containing PII. There were no

information or documents stored on personal computers.

- The anonymity of informants were ensured by assigning a number to each respondent when referring to her/him in the report (ex: respondent 1, respondent 2, etc.), to avoid any PII from being utilized.
- Team members were instructed not to use emails with PII contents unless encrypted.
- The PII data remained stored in the encrypted OneDrive File and no such data were shared outside the evaluation team. Data shared with USAID did not include PII.
- Finally, all PII will be deleted once the final report is approved by USAID and the project is certified as complete.

KIIs have been kept gender inclusive to ensure women key informants are represented. They were held with appropriate protocols to protect the confidentiality of responses (See Annex 2) and abide by COVID-19 health regulations during in-person interviews.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Informed Consent

At the start of each interview, data collectors were read a standard informed consent and confidentiality statement explaining (see Consent Form Document):

- The purpose of the evaluation and why the respondent(s) was(were) selected.
- The length of the interview (generally one hour), and if recorded, that the recording are to be used only by the data collectors to fill any gaps in their notes and that all notes and recordings will be stored in a secure location and destroyed when the evaluation has concluded.
- That participation in the interview is completely voluntary and the respondent may decline to answer any question and also end the interview at any time.

Respondents received a copy of the Informed Consent form, either as a soft copy through e-mail before the virtual interview or as a hard copy at the beginning of an in-person interview (Annex 2). Respondents were asked for oral consent to participate, and permission to audio-record the conversations. If consent is granted, data collectors began recording.

No financial incentives or compensation were provided to the respondents, and data collection occurred during work hours or at a time convenient for the respondents.

Data Management

After data collection, data collectors uploaded all raw data, including recordings, interview notes, and KII sheets onto EnCompass's secure server where they will be stored for a period of three years, at which point they will be destroyed. Data collectors will permanently remove data from their personal computers, tablets, cloud-based servers, and external hard drives.

PII have been collected from all respondents so the ET can follow up with any questions for clarification, given that all respondents are intimately involved or benefiting of the program. Respondents are assigned a unique identification number. There was a single file in which the personal identifying information are linked to this unique identification number. Data were thoroughly scrubbed of names and other identifiers before being electronically transmitted via email or uploaded to EnCompass's secure cloud storage (SharePoint).

Only applications that required password-protected accounts to access were used so that the ET can control project file sharing and grants access only to those working on the evaluation.

Risk Mitigation

The ET conducted interviews in locations that assure privacy or, if not fully private, are comfortable for the respondents. Data collectors reiterated that conversations will remain confidential and remind participants to be respectful and maintain privacy. Data collectors refrained from discussing interview content amongst themselves except when they are in private settings.

Adverse Events

There are two categories of adverse events, defined as:

Category A: Any Serious Adverse Event that Occurs within 48 Hours of Participation in the Research/ Evaluation

Serious adverse events are those resulting in death, a life-threatening experience, hospitalization or prolongation of existing hospitalization, or a persistent or significant disability or incapacity. Every serious adverse event must be reported on a form provided by EnCompass's Institutional Review Board (IRB), even if the event does not appear to be associated with the research protocol. In addition, the IRB (at irb@encompassworld.com) should be notified within 24 hours of discovery of any serious adverse event.

Category B: Any Event for which All Three of the Following are True:

- **Subject or Risks to Subject or Others Adversely Affected:** An event or outcome has occurred that has resulted in harm to the subject, has affected the subject detrimentally, has worsened as a result of their participation, or that has resulted in increased risk to the subject or to others, whether or not the risk has actually resulted in harm (for example, misplacing a subject's research records would constitute an increased risk event that should be reported).
- **Unexpected Event:** The event or outcome was not described as a risk of participation in the research, or, though described as a risk, the event or outcome has occurred with unexpected severity or frequency.
- **Possibly, Probably, or Definitely Related Event:** The event or outcome was definitely related to participation in the research or it is reasonable to conclude that the event or outcome was related to participation or it is possible the event or outcome was related but not enough information is available at this time to assess the likelihood of this possibility.

If an evaluation team member or data collector becomes aware of an adverse event, they must immediately report it to team leader Dr. Imad Salamey on [Phone number] or [Email] referring to the Adverse Event Report provided by the IRB.

Incidents

EnCompass takes personal and organizational security seriously. Physical, personal, and cyber-security measures are employed to avoid, mitigate, and respond to threats as a matter of policy. Understanding that no security measures are invulnerable, EnCompass requires all employees, independent contractors, and beneficiaries to document any incident that represents a threat to the organization, its employees, contractors, and beneficiaries. Where more than one employee, independent contractor, or beneficiary has first-hand knowledge of an incident, team leader, Dr. Imad Salamey, is obligated to take responsibility for assembling a full description of the incident, documenting the context, correspondence, and other information. When a member of the assessment or data collection team becomes aware of an incident, they must complete an incident report, provided by the IRB, and submit it to Dr. Imad Salamey, who will review and transmit it to the appropriate vetted personnel based on a need-to-know basis to address the incident as needed.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Data collection instruments and protocols have been submitted for approval by the EnCompass IRB. Data collection will not begin until IRB approval has been granted. The ET will inform USAID if there is any unexpected delay in the timeframe for IRB approval.

EVALUATION REPORT, VALIDATION, AND DISSEMINATION

Validation Session(s)

The ET will share the draft report, including findings, conclusions, and preliminary recommendations through a virtual validation session with select participants from BALADI-CL and key stakeholders from USAID/Lebanon who participated in the inception meeting. The ET and USAID will identify participants in this session during evaluation implementation. This session will be used to validate findings and conclusions and to co-create and refine recommendations through a participatory and collaborative process. The outcomes of the validation session will be used to finalize the report.

Dissemination

After USAID/Lebanon approves of the evaluation report, the ET will redact it and make it 508-compliant before uploading it on the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) repository for wider dissemination and use by the development community. MEPL will hold a debrief with USAID/Lebanon to discuss the implications of the evaluation's findings for the Mission and obtain its feedback about the evaluation process. Additional dissemination materials will be developed including a 2-3 page Executive Summary document in both English and Arabic for easy sharing with all evaluation participants and other interested stakeholders. Other dissemination modes may be discussed with USAID/Lebanon.

LIMITATIONS

The evaluation has targeted selected projects (53% of total), which have added to the reliability and validity of the findings. However, sample selection might have some drawbacks and limitations on the external validity of findings, as coverage may not be comprehensive. Other limitations on the findings may include spurious variables and the lack of control research design. Lebanese political volatility is always an intervening variable that often upsets expectations, planning, and findings.

Recall bias is expected, especially with beneficiaries and sub-awardees who received the services and support more than a year ago. They may also respond with answers that blend their experiences into a composite memory, and those who participated previously in similar activities may not separately distinguish their BALADI CL experience. The ET has increased sample size as much as possible as one method to mitigate this bias. In addition, in interviews the ET used references to related project or historical events to assist in accurate recall.

The ET is aware of potential response bias from the key informants and beneficiaries, as these may be motivated to provide responses that would be considered socially desirable or influential in obtaining additional support. To mitigate such bias, the ET clarified at the start of every interview that the responses will not influence the possibility of obtaining future assistance while emphasizing the confidential nature of the interview and the importance of collecting factual information.

Additional limitations stem from the fact that much of the RFCA projects' activities have been recently launched and remained premature to be assessed in their capacities to sustain benefits and achieve long terms outcomes. The evaluation attempted to sketch the likelihood of sustaining activities based on persisting community needs and reasonable operation cost. This, however, remains indicative pending verifications by future evaluations.

Consent Form Document

INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR VIRTUAL KII (12TH GRADE READING LEVEL)

Principal Investigator:

Organization: EnCompass LLC

Sponsor: United States Agency for International Development

This informed consent has two parts: (1) information sheet and (2) provision of oral consent.

PART I: INFORMATION

The United States Agency for International Development has recently commissioned an independent Endline Evaluation of their BALADI-CL program in Lebanon, also referred to as the Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development, and Investment – Caritas Lebanon (BALADI-CL) Program. Our objective is to collect the knowledge and experiences you feel comfortable sharing about your communities. The overall goal of the evaluation is to derive evidence to inform strategy and future programming.

Before you decide to participate, you can talk with or ask questions of anyone you feel comfortable with. If you have any questions regarding this content, please let me know. If you have questions later or in the future, you can contact any member of the evaluation team. Information about how you can reach the evaluation team is included in this information sheet.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

For this study, we are collecting information by conducting virtual interviews, focus group discussions with BALADI-CL staff, partner organization staff, local government officials, civil society organizations, community leaders, and community members, as well as an online survey as needed. This interview will last approximately one hour.

Data will be collected between February - March 2022.

RESPONDENT SELECTION

You have been chosen for a key respondent interview because you either have knowledge of and/or experience with the BALADI-CL program or within the communities that BALADI-CL has worked.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND RIGHT TO WITHDRAW

Your participation in this evaluation is entirely voluntary. If you choose not to participate, we will remove the contact information we have for you from our data set. If you decide to participate, you may change your mind and withdraw from the study at any time, and we will remove your contact details and any other information you have provided up to that time. Choosing not to participate in this study will not affect your relationship with United States Agency for International Development or EnCompass LLC.

If you decide to participate, you may ask to skip any question or stop the interview at any time. You do not have to share anything you are not comfortable sharing. After the interview, if you decide you do not want your remarks/answers to be used, you may let us know and we will immediately destroy all information and it will not be used.

PERMISSION TO RECORD

We would like to take notes and record this discussion via the online platform used to conduct the virtual interview (e.g., Teams, Zoom, Jitsi, Signal). This is so that we can develop an accurate transcript of what you say that will help us in analyzing the data. The recording will be kept on EnCompass' secure password-protected web-based platform specific to this evaluation, which is only accessible to the EnCompass team conducting this evaluation. You will not be identified by name in the recording file name, and any identifying information will be removed during transcription. Once the transcription is complete, the recording will be deleted and any written notes will be destroyed, and only the transcript will be kept. In the meantime, no one outside of the EnCompass assessment team will have access to the recordings or notes.

RISKS

The study team will keep all of your answers and personal information in a secure location, and will not share this information with anyone not involved in the study. Your responses will not be shared with colleagues or your supervisor or anyone else.

Your personal information, including your name, will not be included in the final report or any presentation of findings. Any risk of breaching your privacy or confidentiality has been significantly reduced by the strict rules and ethical principles all our team members have agreed to observe.

In terms of risks:

1. Some questions may cause discomfort or distress. If that is the case, we will give you a list of people you can call or meet for assistance. You can ask us at any time for this information—now, during, or after we finish the interview. You can also leave the interview for a while or leave and not come back.

2. There is a chance that the conversation could be intercepted online from the platform we are using to conduct the virtual interview (e.g., Zoom, Jitsi, Signal). We are taking many steps to prevent this from happening, such as using password-protected meeting links and choosing encrypted platforms when possible. However, it is still possible that the discussion could be intercepted through a security breach in the online platform.

3. There is a chance that the information you share will not stay private due to a data leak. We are doing many things with the data we collect to prevent the leak from happening, but it could happen.

4. You may be worried someone will learn what you said and not like that you joined the meeting. You may not feel safe. Again, we will do everything we can to keep your answers safe and private. If someone does find out, somehow, you may not feel safe. You can contact people listed on this consent form. We will give you a copy of this form, if participating in this study affects your safety. There are actions we can take to keep your answers safe.

BENEFITS

You may receive no direct benefits from participating in this study, but your participation is likely to help inform USAID's programming.

REIMBURSEMENTS

No compensation is provided for this interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The information you share will be kept confidential. We will not share the information you provide to us with anyone who is not part of the evaluation team. We will store information, such as recordings, transcripts, and notes, electronically in password-protected and secure web-based data storage and analysis platforms specific to this evaluation. The interview transcripts, notes, and recordings will be de-identified, with each participant assigned a number ID. The ID linked to each participant will only be available in a participant tracker, which is saved separately on the password-protected platform specific to this evaluation that is only accessible to the EnCompass assessment team. Information analyzed will be anonymous. We will destroy all the information you provide three years after the publication of the final report.

SHARING SUMMARY RESULTS

The evaluation team will combine the information you provide with that from other interview respondents, focus group participants, reviewed documents; and/or survey respondents as needed, and we will present it in a final report that we will share with the USAID and other stakeholders. An external version summary will also be produced and we can send it to you. This report will also be available to other data collection participants and members of the public.

WHOM TO CONTACT

This study has been reviewed and approved by the EnCompass LLC Review Board [insert reference number], whose members are tasked with making sure participants are protected from harm. If you wish to find out more about the ethics review, contact IRB at irb@encompassworld.com.

If you have any questions about this research study in the future, please contact me using the following information:

Name and phone # of interviewer: _____

If you have complaints about our team or the study, please contact:

Dr. Imad Salamey

Team Lead, BALADI-CL Program Evaluation

Email: isalamey@encompassworld.com

PART II: PROVISION OF ORAL CONSENT, CONSENT TO RECORD AND CONSENT TO BE CONTACTED TO RECEIVE EXTERNAL SUMMARY

Say to the respondent: I want to confirm that you have read the consent form or I have read it to you. Do you have any additional questions?

After answering respondent's questions: Do you voluntarily consent to participate in this study?

Following verbal consent, note the response of the respondent with your initials:

Yes ___ No ___ Interviewer's initials: _____

If the respondent answers no:

Thank them for their time and end the interview.

If the respondent answers yes:

Ask them for their verbal consent to audio and video record the conversation using the virtual platform: I/We would like to both take notes and audio and video record our conversation. This is so we can develop an accurate transcription of what you say. The recording can be stopped at any time, if you choose to do so. We will delete the recording and destroy written notes immediately after creating a transcription of the conversation. The transcription will be deleted three years after the publication of the final report. In the meantime, no one outside of the study team will have access to this information.

Do you give me/us permission to record the audio and video of this virtual interview, using the record feature of this platform?

Following verbal consent to audio and video-record, note the response of the respondent with your initials:

Yes ___ No ___ Interviewer's initials: _____

If the respondent answers yes: Continue with the interview. **If the respondent answers no:** I understand your decision not to have our conversation recorded. Would you be comfortable proceeding with this interview if I take written notes only and do not use the record feature on this platform?

If the respondent agrees to hand-written notes, proceed with the interview.

Would you like us to send the report using the same contact information that we used to contact you?

Yes ___ No ___ Interviewer's initials: _____

If the respondent does not consent to hand-written notes, end the interview.

Signature of the interviewer: _____

Date: _____

ANNEX 3: EVALUATION DESIGN MATRIX

Evaluation Question I: Did BALADI-CL/RFCA projects contribute to CDCS? (Relevance)

Core Evaluation Questions/Sub-Questions	Judgement Criteria	Evaluation Tools/Methods	Data source	Data collection method	Sample
<p>To what extent was the project appropriately designed to reach outcomes?</p> <p>To what extent was the project designed in a gender-sensitive and inclusive manner?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the package of interventions together generate the desired outcome level changes? • Was there a clear enough identification of assumptions/strategy/ ToC/logical framework including an analysis of constraints and how to tackle these? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cumulative review of evidence against program aims and KPIs. • Cause-and-effect analysis • Desk Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project MEL Plan • Modification Agreements • RFCA Agreements • Progress Reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive documents selection.
<p>To what extent did the awarded municipal projects and NGOs address critical community-identified needs?</p> <p>How were the needs of women and youth identified and taken into consideration?</p> <p>Were they addressed? How?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of a clear and appropriate targeting strategy for all projects • Evidence that the cumulative targeting at programme level also has a strategy/ rationale • Have hard-to-reach and/or “difficult” groups (e.g. marginalized) been targeted? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme and project document review • # beneficiaries reached (total and sub-divided by gender, age, geographical location) • Interviews with IP • Interviews with sub-awardees • Interviews with beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-Awardees Projects Documents • Sub-Awardees progress reports • Lists of beneficiaries • IP • Sub-Awardees • Beneficiaries • USAID 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Desk Review • 2020 Evaluation Review • KIIs • FGDs • USAID 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID • IP and sub-awardees • Beneficiaries
<p>How did projects adapt as community needs changed?</p> <p>How were the projects tweaked and adapted in a way to meet</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence of targeting to different groups including geographical, gender, age. • Whether activities have been able to adapt to changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of project proposals, reports and evaluations • Interviews with project staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project documents • Project progress reports • Lists of beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modification Agreements Review • RFCA Agreements Review • KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 FGD with USAID team. • 1 KII: IP Director • 9 KIIs with Sub-awardees [RFCA1 2/5, RFCA BER 2/4, RFCA2 5/11]

Core Evaluation Questions/Sub-Questions	Judgement Criteria	Evaluation Tools/Methods	Data source	Data collection method	Sample
women, youth and people with diverse backgrounds needs?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with Sub-Awardees Interviews with beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IP Sub-Awardees Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FGDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 FGDs with beneficiaries [RFCA1 1/5, RFCA BER 1/4, RFCA2 2/1 1]

Evaluation Question 2: To what extent has the project achieved its intended outputs and outcomes? (Effectiveness)

Core Evaluation Questions/Sub-Questions	Judgement Criteria	Evaluation Tools/Methods	Data source	Data collection method	Sample
Were the inputs appropriate towards producing the intended outputs?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that awarded projects had robust project designs. Evidence that project approaches are informed by international best practice as well as being relevant to the context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review Interviews with IP project staff Interviews with Sub-Awardees Interviews with beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project progress reports IP Sub-Awardees Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modification Agreements review RFCA Agreements review Project progress reports Review KIIs FGDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 KIIs: IP 9 KIIs with Sub-awardees [RFCA1 2/5, RFCA BER 2/4, RFCA2 5/1 1] 4 FGDs with beneficiaries [RFCA1 1/5, RFCA BER 1/4, RFCA2 2/1 1]
What factors (endogenous or exogenous) contributed to the achievement or non-achievement of results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that different factors have acted as enablers and constraints in delivery of both outputs and outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of IP reports Review Sub-Awardee reports Interview with IP and Sub-Awardees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project progress reports IP Sub-Awardees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project progress reports Review KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 KIIs: IP 9 KIIs with Sub-awardees program directors [RFCA1 2/5, RFCA BER 2/4, RFCA2 5/1 1]
What evidence is there that BALADI-CL/RFCA contributed to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of the local impacts due to programme and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports Interviews with Sub-Awardees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project progress reports Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 KIIs: IP 9 KIIs with Sub-awardees [RFCA1 2/4,

Core Evaluation Questions/Sub-Questions	Judgement Criteria	Evaluation Tools/Methods	Data source	Data collection method	Sample
improved public service delivery in local communities?	project implementation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project progress reports Sub-Awardees Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs FGDs 	RFCA BER 2/5, RFCA2 6/11] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 FGDs with beneficiaries [RFCA1 1/5, RFCA BER 1/4, RFCA2 2/11]
To what extent were BALADI-CL results experienced by communities equitably? Were women, youth, or marginalized groups able to access/participate in activities and experience results?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of benefits received by diverse groups including women, youth, and marginalized. Evidence of access and benefits obtained by diverse groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with local beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> FGDs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 FGDs with beneficiaries [RFCA1 1/5, RFCA BER 1/4, RFCA2 2/11]
To what extent were the awarded projects developed, implemented, and closed in a participatory and gender-sensitive and inclusive way?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of engagements during projects/proposal developments Evidence of support, communication, and participation during project implementations. Evidence of effective communication and smooth transition toward project closure. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with IP and Sub-Awardees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IP Sub-Awardees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Desk review KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 KIIs: IP 9 KIIs with Sub-awardees [RFCA1 2/5, RFCA BER 2/4, RFCA2 5/11]
To what extent did BALADI-CL/RFCA effectively manage material and human resources? To what extent were quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of IP performing appropriate mobilization of resources and management of HR. Evidence of transparent and appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview with IP staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project progress reports IP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project progress reports Review KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 KIIs: IP

Core Evaluation Questions/Sub-Questions	Judgement Criteria	Evaluation Tools/Methods	Data source	Data collection method	Sample
assurance requirements, procurement procedures, and environmental measures complied with?	procedure in procurement and environmental compliance				
To what extent did the Program adhere to its Communication and Outreach Plan, and generate awareness of the Program, its results, and USAID/Lebanon? How were women, youth and people with diverse backgrounds outreached? What strategies were used?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of effective management and communication outreach with sub-awardees. Evidence of effective communication and reporting with USAID. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with IP staff and Sub-Awardees Project reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress Reports IP Sub-awardees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project progress reports Review KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 KIIs: IP 9 KIIs with Sub-awardees [RFCA1 2/5, RFCA BER 2/4, RFCA2 5/11]
How did Program management adapt when the BALADI-CL context changed in 2020, and what mechanisms and procedures most supported rapid Program adjustment?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of handling and mitigation of transition in challenging environment. Evidence of mechanisms and procedures supporting/undermining rapid and effective transition. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with IP staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress Reports IP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project progress reports Review KIIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 KIIs: IP

Evaluation Question 3: Are the projects and the overall program B-CL/RFMA and RFCA likely to be sustainable into the future? (Sustainability)

Core Evaluation Questions/Sub-Questions	Judgement Criteria	Evaluation Tools/Methods	Data source	Data collection method	Sample
<p>What are the major factors/ challenges and opportunities encountered to sustain activities at the municipal or NGO level?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence for ownership by key partners of the activity or project Evidence of sustained activities after project ending Evidence of challenges undermining sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with key stakeholders Context analysis Reviews of relevant documents Interviews with IP staff Interviews with Sub-Awardees Interviews with beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project progress reports IP Sub-Awardees Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation Report 2020 review Project progress reports Review KIIs FGDs Site Visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 KIIs: IP 9 KIIs with Sub-awardees [RFCA 1 2/5, RFCA BER 2/4, RFCA2 5/11] 4 FGDs with beneficiaries [RFCA 1 1/5, RFCA BER 1/4, RFCA2 2/11] 4 RFMA municipal site visits 2 RFMA FGDS 5 site visits to RFCA Sub-awardees (sustainable vs. unsustainable).
<p>How did the Activity leverage institutional factors, community groups/members, including women, youth and people with diverse backgrounds, enterprises, and other elements to maximize the likelihood of sustained results?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of scalability of activities Evidence of attracting partnership Evidence of self-sustaining activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviews with key stakeholders Interviews with Sub-Awardees Interviews with beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project documents Project progress reports IP Sub-Awardees Beneficiaries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation Report 2020 review Project progress reports Review KIIs FGDs Site Visits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 KIIs: IP 9 KIIs with Sub-awardees [RFCA 1 2/5, RFCA BER 2/4, RFCA2 5/11] 4 FGDs with beneficiaries [RFCA 1 1/5, RFCA BER 1/4, RFCA2 2/11] 4 RFMA municipal site visits 2 RFMA FGDS 5 site visits to RFCA Sub-awardees (sustainable vs. unsustainable).

Lessons learned and recommendations: What are the key lessons learned and what recommendations are there for future programme design?

Core Evaluation Questions/Sub-Questions	Judgement Criteria	Evaluation Tools/Methods	Data source	Data collection method	Sample
<p>What are the key lessons and recommendations in terms of USAID performance (programme and context management, cross-USAID effort, political access and influencing)?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence that the programme has clear links to USAID policy objectives and that its contribution to these is assessed. Evidence of adaptive programming Evidence of good Embassy-partner relationship and management of IPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of programme alignment with CDCS strategy or its modifications Interviews with USAID Feedback from IP on USAID approach 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project MEL Plan CDCS Document Modifications RFCA agreements IP USAID 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation Report 2020 review Project MEL Plan Review Modifications Review RFCA Review KIIs FGD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 KIIs: IP 1 FGD with USAID team
<p>What lessons have been learned at the project level? What lessons on gender and inclusion were learned? What evidence is there of adaptive programming?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of lesson-learning and adaptive programming by the Implementing Partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IP reports Interviews with IP Interviews with USAID 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IP USAID 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> KIIs FGD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 KIIs: IP 1 FGD with USAID team
<p>What are the key lessons and recommendations for the strategic design of the programme going forward?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suggested strategic focus, approach, ToC, target groups. Pointers and criteria for ensuring best use of limited resources to achieve USAID strategic objectives amid volatile environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment of overall findings and implications for forward programming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All documents reviewed and responses of KII and FGD participants 		

RFCA Sub-awardees selection

NGO / FBO Name	Sub-Awardee	District	RFCA	Project Concept	Deliverable	KIIs	Site visit	FGD
[redacted]	NGO	Zgharta	I	Provision of sewing and embroidery machines and computers and a training in sewing and embroidery and GBV awareness sessions for 48 women.	Sewing equipment and training	X	X	X
[redacted]	Christian FBO	Keserwan	I	Equipment provision to an educational Argo-processing food center for GBV survivors and providing Agro-processing training to beneficiaries from two FBOs.	Agricultural equipment	X		
[redacted]	Christian NGO	All districts	I	Training provision, in partnership with USAID's partner, Lebanon Investment in Quality, (LINQ) on modern agricultural practices to youth coming from the regions and suburbia's of 13 dioceses and Provision of agricultural machinery, equipment and tools that will be used during the practical component of the training and after the end of the project to support these youth and other vulnerable farmers.	Agricultural equipment and training	X		X
[redacted]	Alawite FBO	Tripoli	2	Vocational training provision on digital skills including equipment	Computer equipment and training	X	X	X
[redacted]	NGO	Chouf	2	Equipment provision for Fruit and vegetable packaging center.	Agricultural equipment	X	X	X

[redacted]	Christian FBO	Metn	2	Rehabilitation and Equipment provision of a Community Kitchen unit including a production unit.	Kitchen equipment	X		
[redacted]	Christian NGO	Beirut	2	Capacity building and psychosocial support	Training and psychosocial support			
[redacted]	Christian FBO	Keserwan	2	Equipment provision for an Intensive rehabilitation program for children with non-progressive neurological disorder	Special needs equipment	X		
[redacted]	Christian FBO	Metn	2	Photovoltaic system equipment provision for the School	Solar equipment	X	X	
[redacted]	NGO	Beirut	BER	Capacity building for front line aid workers on psychosocial first aid and provision of psychosocial activities to the affected population and distribution of PSS kits.	Psychosocial Support	X		
[redacted]	Christian FBO	Beirut	BER	Rehabilitation of damaged premises and equipment provision for a daycare	Medical equipment	X		
[redacted]	Christian FBO	Beirut	BER	IT and laboratory equipment provision for a Technical School	Computer equipment	X		

RFMA Sub-awardees

Municipality/ Union	District	Project Description	Rationale	Site visit	FGD
[redacted]	Baalbek	Construction of a cold storage facility to help the farmers store their crops and sell them during the off-season.	Selected by previous evaluation and relevant for beneficiaries input	x	x
[redacted]	Baabda	Rehabilitation of a Sports Court, and the establishment of a kiosk, dressing rooms, rest rooms...	Selected by previous evaluation and representative	x	
[redacted]	Metn	Establishment of a hiking trail	Selected by previous evaluation and representative	x	
[redacted]	Aley	Installation of three solar stations of 227 panels providing 60 KWp of electricity and a generator	Selected by previous evaluation and relevant for beneficiaries' input	x	x

KII Tools with BALADI CL Staff

A. How did the project provide for environmental reporting and compliance?

1. Can you please describe the process for: USAID Environmental monitoring, reporting/ and compliance?
2. Can you describe the process for the development of ERACs?
3. Who are the staff involved in the process? (Names, positions) and what are their responsibilities. Were female staff involved? What positions did they hold and what contributions did they make?
4. Follow up question: Turnover rate, how many people assumed these specific functions during the past two years.
5. Did you contract a company to support with environmental reporting, If yes can you describe the process? What went well and what did not?
6. Follow up question: what led to the termination of the contract with the company?
7. What is the current quality assurance mechanism implemented? Can you generally describe what your Program has done from 2020 to date to ensure practices in this area are up to standards of quality?
8. Who has ultimate responsibility, within the hierarchy of the organization to ensure the quality and timeliness of response, (Names, positions)
9. What are you especially proud of with regards to environmental reporting and compliance? What went well? Can you provide examples. What were the major challenges that you encountered in terms of environmental reporting and compliance? what should have been done differently, and what were the major lessons learned? Can you provide examples
10. **Additional probes:**
 - What were the major factors internal or external contributing to these challenges?
 - Can you explain these specific ERACs: [redacted]
 - what can you tell me about them? Where you able to implement the EMMP included in these documents, why /why not? Do you have any final comments or last thoughts that you would like to share with us?

B. Whether procurement was effectively managed?

- Can you please describe the process for: procurement for the BALADI-Caritas project?
- Do internal guidelines, manuals exist? If yes, can you share, if no, why not?
- Who are the staff involved in the process? (Names, positions).
- Follow up question: Turnover rate, how many people assumed these specific functions during the past two years.
- What is the current quality assurance mechanism implemented? Can you generally describe what your Program has done from 2020 to date to ensure practices in this area are up to standards of quality?
- Who has ultimate responsibility, within the hierarchy of the organization to ensure the quality and timeliness of response, (Names, positions)
- What are you especially proud of with regards to procurement processes? What went well?
- Are you usually involved in asset transfer to NGOs or municipalities? If yes describe your role, and the major challenges you faced in transferring the equipment to municipalities
- What were the major challenges you encountered that caused delays in procurement, or the non-procurement of certain items what should have been done differently, and what were the major lessons learned?
- Additional probes:**
 - What were the major factors internal or external contributing to these challenges, delays in procurement, can you mention a few examples?
 - Can you mention some instances where you exceeded budget on some procurements, why did that happen?
 - Can you provide examples of a time when you did not procure certain equipment, why did that happen?
 - Can you share the procurement log, where issues and challenges can be tracked?
 - Where can we find the procurement budget, can you share that
 - Do you have any final comments or last thoughts that you would like to share with the evaluator?

C. How effective was human resource management?

1. Can you please describe the process for recruiting staff under BALADI Caritas project?
2. How many females are recruited? How many persons with disability, if any?
3. Do internal guidelines and manuals exist? If yes, can you share, if no, why not?
4. Who are the staff involved in the process? (Names, positions).
5. What were the positions that had the highest turnover rate, during the past couple of years? what were the reasons?
6. Who is responsible for quality assurance in the BALADI Caritas project? Can you generally describe what has been done from 2020 to date to ensure practices in this area are up to standards of quality?

7. What are you especially proud of with regards to HR/staff management? What went well?
8. What were the major challenges encountered, what should have been done differently, and what were the major lessons learned, can you mention examples?
9. Do you have any final comments or last thoughts that you would like to share with us?

D. How effective was Grants Management

1. Can you please describe your role under BALADI Caritas project?
2. Do internal guidelines and manuals exist? If yes, can you share, if no, why not?
3. Follow up question: Turnover rate, how many people assumed these specific functions during the past two years.
4. What is the current quality assurance mechanism implemented? Can you generally describe what your Program has done from 2020 to date to ensure practices in this area are up to standards of quality?
5. What are you especially proud of with regards to grants management? What went well?
6. What were the major challenges you encountered, what should have been done differently, and what were the major lessons learned, can you mention examples?
7. To what extent are you involved in the transfer of assets, what do you know about the process? If yes, what were the major challenges encountered?

Additional probes:

- Can you explain some of the challenges encountered specially when transferring assets to municipalities? Did you face the same challenges when transferring assets to NGOs? Why /why not?
- Do you have any final comments or last thoughts that you would like to share with the evaluation team?

E. How Effective was Monitoring and Evaluation

1. Can you please describe your role under BALADI Caritas project?
2. Who are the staff involved in the M&E process in terms of data collection, analysis, and reporting? (Names, positions).
3. Follow up question: Turnover rate, how many people assumed these specific functions during the past two years.
4. What is the current quality assurance mechanism being implemented in BALADI Caritas? Do you or the M&E team play a role in that? If yes, what is your role?
5. What are you especially proud of with regards to M&E? What went well?
6. What were the major challenges you encountered, what should have been done differently, and what were the major lessons learned, can you mention examples?

Additional Questions:

- How soon can we receive the nominal database? Are there any challenges regarding that we need to be aware of?
- Do you have any final comments or last thoughts that you would like to share with us?

F. Program director

1. Overall, how would you describe the relevance and benefit of this Program to the communities?
2. How were the needs and inclusion of diverse groups taken into consideration both at BALADI Caritas and in the selection and work with the awardees?
3. How would you describe the performance and deliverables of the departments at BALADI Caritas?
4. What could have contributed to improving this?
5. What are you most proud of about the teamwork?
6. What are you most proud of about the deliverables of the Program?
7. How has BALADI Caritas adapted to the changing context?
8. What has been the learning from this Program, particularly about the partnerships with USAID, in A&E and ERAC?
9. How do you see the projects funded being sustainable in the coming two years? How has BALADI Caritas contributed to supporting sustainability?

KIIs Tools for RFMA Sub-Awardees

Context:

1. How many of Municipal councilwomen are there?
2. If MUNICIPAL UNION: How many municipalities are there in the union? What is your position in the union? And president of which municipality? How many women are there in the union? Are there any women with disabilities?
3. Were you involved in the BALADI-CL program from the beginning?

Sustainability:

4. What was the most important benefit to your community resulting from this project?
5. How did these benefits impact women, youth and people with diverse backgrounds including people with disabilities?
6. Are any neighboring or other municipalities benefiting from the project/facility? Describe.
7. If MUNICIPAL UNION: Was the project beneficial for the union?
8. If MUNICIPAL UNION: How, and how much did the other municipalities in the union participate in the design and selection of the project?
9. If MUNICIPAL UNION: How, and how much did the other municipalities in the union participate in the implementation of the project?
10. Did you face any challenges during the execution of the project? Describe? If Yes: Did you find the needed support?
11. PRIVATE SECTOR MANAGEMENT: What type of contractual agreement is used? What is the role of the municipality? How is the relationship working? [is it a real PPP relationship?]
12. If MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT: Are you facing challenges in managing or sustaining the facility? Explain.
13. Is the project covering its costs?
14. Is it generating revenues above its costs [surplus revenue]?
15. If GENERATING SURPLUS REVENUE: Who is benefiting from the surplus revenue?
16. When and how did the handover take place? (if not yet, how much time does it still require?)
17. To what extent are women involved in the BALADI project? [Participant? Leadership role?] were there any women with disabilities involved? If yes, what measures were taken to ensure accessibility and inclusiveness?
18. If WOMEN INVOLVED: How do they participate in ongoing management of the project?
19. What challenges, including gender-based discrimination did the women face while participating in the project? How were these challenges overcome if so?
20. Did the project contribute to women's empowerment and to challenging social, cultural and gender norms? How?
21. Did the project contribute to positive youth development, if so, how?
22. To what extent has the project created jobs/employment opportunities for people living in the village/area? Any permanent jobs created? Seasonal? Who pays their salaries?
23. To what extent did the project contribute to improving the well-being, livelihood and income-generating opportunities for women?
24. Was the project responsive enough to women needs, priorities, interests, etc. Including women with disabilities?
25. Is the community stronger owing to this project? How do you observe this?
26. Did the project meet your expected needs? (are you satisfied with the results?)
27. If you had the chance to change something, what would it be?
28. What do you need or expect as additional support to evolve or sustain the project?

KII Tools for RFCA Sub-Awardees

Context

1. Since when was your NGO legally registered?
2. Where is your office located?
3. How many members are there in your NGO?
4. How many permanent staff does your NGO have?
5. Do you have employees with disabilities? If yes, how many?
6. How many of them are women? And what positions do they hold in the NGO?
7. Were WOMEN NGO members involved in the BALADI project? If so, how did they participate?
8. What is your scope of your NGO's work in general?

Relevance

9. How was the project designed to reach its objectives?
10. How did you select your beneficiaries? What categories were utilized?
11. How were females and youth outreached including vulnerable females and youth with disabilities and diverse backgrounds?
12. What challenges were faced while trying to outreach females and youth? How were these challenges overcome?
13. How did your project respond to current economic and turbulent environment?
14. How did your project work towards improving the well-being and livelihood opportunities for females and youth?
15. Was your project designed to meet women and youth needs? Was there any gender and youth analysis conducted to inform the project?
16. Was the project designed to shift cultural, social and gender norms, if so, how?
17. What was the most important benefit to your community resulting from this project?
18. How did these benefits impact women and youth? How did it affect their day-to-day life?
19. Does the project fill an important need of the community? Y/N/NA]
20. Who are the main users of the facility/service?
21. Are the facilities and services made inclusive and accessible for those with disabilities and diverse backgrounds?
22. Do you know if the facility was targeted in any way to benefit women, youth or People with Disabilities?
23. To what extent has the project created jobs/employment opportunities for people living in the village/area including females? Any permanent jobs created? Seasonal? Who pays their salaries?
24. Does the project record sex and age disaggregated data? What is the ratio of the females in the project?
25. Is the community stronger owing to this project? How do you observe this?

Effectiveness

29. Were you involved from the beginning: design, selection, execution, management, oversight?
30. Would you say that a participatory approach was used to design the proposal(s)? were women staff involved in the process? What contributions and considerations did they add? [Probe in relations to CARITAS Management Team]
31. If YES - PARTICIPATORY: Can you recall/describe BALADI management team? the community's participation? In the design? During implementation?
32. Did you face any challenges during the execution of the project? Describe? [Probe in relations with BALADI management team]
33. Were there any gender-based challenges faced? What were they and how were they overcome?
34. If YES - CHALLENGES: Describe the challenge(s) and how you overcame it/them? Did you find the needed support? [Probe in relations to BALADI management team]

35. To what extent did BALADI team make aware about needing to design and implement the project in compliance with gender-sensitivity, inclusiveness, quality assurance requirements, procurement procedures, and environmental measures?
36. To what extent do you think your Program adhere generate awareness about its benefits and that of USAID/Lebanon? Where these achievements communicated to BALADI team.
37. How would you assess the overall BALADI team's management of your project from beginning to end? Any recommendations for improvement?

Sustainability

38. Are you facing challenges in managing the service/facility now? Explain.
39. Is the project covering its costs?
40. Is it generating revenues above its costs [surplus revenue]?
41. Did the BALADI project enhance collaboration between your NGO, the municipality/private sector, and community/village residents? How?
42. Do you have new partners interested to support your project now? Are there partners that are female-led?
43. Will you face any challenges in keeping it operating the project at a good level?
44. If you had the chance to change something, what would it be?
45. What additional support is required to upscale or sustain the project and make it gender-sensitive as well as inclusive?

KII Tools for USAID Staff

Context:

1. Background about the development of the project
2. How it has been managed by USAID

Relevance [RFCA]

1. How does the USAID consider RFCAs were relevant to its country objectives?
2. How does the USAID find the sub-awarded projects contributed to its objectives?
3. How does the USAID determine population needs and required modifications?
4. How did the USAID determine that these sub-awarded projects are targeting the right population and responding to needs?
5. How were the needs of women and youth identified and taken into consideration? Were they addressed? How?
6. What kind of strategy (to reach goals) did USAID utilize toward BALADI while adapting to a turbulent economic and political environment?
7. To what extent do you think the B/CL program contributed to improving public services?
8. Generally, to what extent do you think the selected initiatives contributed to enhancing inclusive economic growth?
9. Building social capital was part of the program design. How would you describe or define "social capital" in communities? How did the different projects contribute to social capital?
10. Has USAID or other IP, donor recently assessed the local development context? Are there studies we should see, for context? Any indicator of municipal performance, for example?

Effectiveness [RFCA]

11. How do you assess BALADI's management's team handling of projects in terms of effectively implementing the program while adapting to changes?
12. How do you assess the interactive relationship between USAID and BALADI-CL management team?
13. Do you believe that you played a participatory role in supporting the development of BALADI-CL sub award program?
14. What were the areas of strengths and weaknesses in project coordination and supervision with BALADI-CL? [Probe for reporting, project selections, feedbacks, response to challenges, oversight, communication effectiveness, women participation, others]
15. How did the BALADI-CL reporting help USAID measure own achievements toward goals?

Sustainability [RFCA and RFMA]

16. What do you consider the most significant outcomes or achievements of the project? What makes them significant? "Biggest success story -- big picture"
17. What are USAID's main lessons learned from its experience with BALADI-CL RFMA and RFCA?
18. Looking ahead: What would USAID maintain, change, or omit in BALADI-CL/ RFMA and RFCA? Why?
19. To help us frame forward-looking recommendations can you describe any relevant changes in the new CDCS, or the mission-wide Results Framework? E.g., new or changed Development Objectives or Intermediate Results? What factors triggered these changes in direction, if any?
20. Any other thoughts or forward-looking ideas for future program design

FGD Tool with Beneficiaries of RFCA and RFMA

FGD - INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

FGD QUESTIONS FOR [redacted] /Female

1 How did you learn about this project and enroll? Why did you enroll? (objective: identify knowledge of USAID, DOC plan, selection process)

2 Can you please tell us about your experience taking the courses and GBV awareness session? (objective: quality of equipment and training, diversity of beneficiaries, encouragement of feedback and complaints)

3 How have you benefited from taking these courses and the equipment? (objective: learn about your initiative, ability to use the equipment and moving to a new shop in August, knowledge about who to refer to for GBV issues).

Did these courses, sessions and the project overall change any social and cultural gender norms as in changing the roles of women in your community and context and having women receiving an income? (understand how the overall project impacted the gender, social and cultural norms in the community where the project was implemented).

4 How do you expect to continue using the equipment in the coming months? And contributing to the project? Are there any barriers you would like to flag that the organization can work on to facilitate using the equipment? What skills do you think you still need to continue using the equipment in the coming months? (objective: capture barriers and obstacles that women may face if they want to continue using the equipment and work on these challenges accordingly to facilitate the sustainability of the project).

5 What challenges have you faced to access the trainings and the shop and while working? How were they overcome? Is the project accessible and inclusive enough for those with disabilities? (objective: identify gender based discrimination, sustainability, needs of diverse groups)

Was there any gender-based discrimination you faced while trying to access the trainings and the shop? What was this discrimination like and how did you respond to it? (objective: identify whether any gender-based discrimination and harassment were faced in order to set the needed safety planning for the project or for future projects).

6 How inclusive is this project of people of diverse backgrounds, gender? In other words, did you feel that this project was responsive enough to your needs as women and to the needs of other groups?

7 What would you recommend to improve the quality, inclusivity, outreach and relevance of the project? What measures do you recommend setting in order for this project to speak to your needs and to ensure its sustainability? (Objective: identify whether the project was responsive to the needs of women and set the needed measures in order to make the project more informed and has the potential to respond to women and other diverse groups' needs including people with disabilities).

FGD QUESTIONS FOR [redacted] / Male Youth

1 How did you learn about this project and enroll? Why did you enroll? (objective: learn about the Outreach campaign through the Patriarchal Office, identify knowledge of USAID, DOC plan, selection process)

2 Can you please tell us about your experience taking the trainings and using the equipment? (objective: quality of equipment and training, diversity of beneficiaries, encouragement of feedback and complaints)

3 How have you benefited from taking these courses and the equipment?

4 What challenges have you faced to access the trainings? How were they overcome? (objective: sustainability, needs of diverse groups)

Are the trainings and the overall project accessible for those with disabilities? If not, how can the project become more accessible and inclusive?

5 How inclusive is this project of people of diverse backgrounds, gender? Do you think this project was able to respond to your needs as youth? If so, what were these needs that were covered by the project? (objective: identify to what extent the project was informed in a way that responded to the needs of youth and people with diverse backgrounds).

6 What is the relevance of these trainings and equipment to the farmers in your area?

7 How do you expect to continue using the equipment and applying the skills acquired in the coming months? And contributing to the project?

What skills do you still need in order to continue your participation in the project?

How do you think what you learnt will contribute to your development as well as the development of your community? What positive income and results will this project generate for you and for your community?

8 What would you recommend to improve the quality, inclusivity, accessibility, outreach and relevance of the project?

FGD QUESTIONS FOR [redacted]/Male farmers

- 1** How did you learn about this project and enroll? Why did you enroll? (objective: learn about the Outreach campaign, identify knowledge of USAID, DOC plan, selection process)
- 2** Can you please tell us about your experience using the equipment? (objective: quality of equipment and training, diversity of beneficiaries, encouragement of feedback and complaints)
- 3** How have you benefited from using the equipment?
- 4** How do you expect to continue using the equipment in the coming months? And contributing to the project?
- 5** What challenges have you faced to access and utilize the equipment? How were they overcome? (objective: sustainability, needs of diverse groups)
- 6** How inclusive is this project of people of diverse backgrounds, gender and including people with disabilities? Do you think this project responds to your needs as male farmers? How?
- 7** What would you recommend to improve the quality, inclusivity, outreach and relevance of the project?

FGD QUESTIONS FOR [redacted] /FEMALE YOUTH

- 1** How did you learn about this project and enroll? Why did you enroll? (objective: learn about the Outreach campaign, identify knowledge of USAID, DOC plan, selection process)
- 2** Can you please tell us about your experience at the Digital Lab? (objective: quality of equipment and training, diversity of beneficiaries, encouragement of feedback and complaints) Do you think this is accessible for females with disabilities, if not, how can it be more inclusive?
- 3** How have you benefited from the training? What skills do you think you still need? (objective: identify application of skills outside lab, internship opportunities, work opportunities, social network building)
- 4** What challenges including gender-based discrimination have you faced to access the lab and utilize the equipment? How were they overcome? (objective: sustainability, needs of diverse groups)
- 5** How inclusive is this project of people of diverse backgrounds, gender and including people with disabilities?
- 6** What would you recommend to improve the quality, inclusivity, accessibility, outreach and relevance of the project?

FGD QUESTIONS FOR [redacted] COLD STORAGE FACILITY USERS

- CS01** Can you each tell us how long you have been using the cold storage facility? How do you use it (what function it fills for you)?
- CS02** How well does this CS meet your needs? Does it function well? Discuss, conclude.
- CS03** What features of the CS would you say are most useful or valuable to you? What features are missing?
- CS04** Are there features that you do not need or that are not useful for some reason? Discuss.
- CS05** Do you have challenges accessing or using the CS? Is it accessible enough for women and people with disabilities?
- CS06** How have you benefited from having this CS? (objective: check on increased income, cost saving, establishment of a unified local sellers' market)
- CS07** Who was responsible for establishing the CS? Do you know who was behind the initiative? Who paid for it? Who was involved in setting it up? Were there any females involved?
- CS08** Do you know who owns and manages the CS? Have they kept it operating well? Do you think they will be able to keep it operating and well maintained? Why do you think so (or not)?
- CS09** Are community members involved in operating or managing the facility Including women and people with disabilities?

ANNEX 4: SOURCES OF INFORMATION

I. USAID/LEBANON DOCUMENTS

CDCS

1. I50224 Country Development Cooperation Strategy - Lebanon - Public - FINAL.docx

RFA, Cooperative Agreement and Modifications

2. Request for Applications SOL-268-12-000006 – March 2012
3. Cooperative Agreement CA No.AID-268-A-12-00005 - Final September 2012
4. Contract Modifications: Mod 12 – November 2019; Mod 13- January 2020; Mod 14 – February 2020; Mod 15-April 2020; Mod16 – July 2020; Mod 17 – February 2022.

Evaluations

5. BALADI Caritas Final Performance Evaluation – February 2020

II. BALADI DOCUMENTS

Proposal

6. Lebanon BALADI CL Technical Proposal (revised 26 Sep 2012)

RFCA: all grants documents per awardee

RFMA: business plans of sampled municipalities

M&E

7. Approved M&E Plan – December 2020
8. M&E Tracker Updated 31-12-2021

Progress Reports: FY2022 Q1; FY2021 Q1,Q2,Q3 andQ4; FY2020 Q1,Q2,Q3 and Q4.

ANNEX 5: DISCLOSURE OF ANY CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

Team member	Conflict of interest form
James Fremming, Chief of Party - Lebanon (EnCompass)	[redacted]
Nour El Zaouk, Data Analyst (EnCompass)	[redacted]
Dr. Imad Salamey, Team Lead (Independent Consultant)	[redacted]
Stephanie Bassil, Research and Evaluation Specialist (Management Systems International)	[redacted]
Dr. Pragati Godbole, (EnCompass)	[redacted]
Hiba Shatila, Administrative Support (EnCompass)	[redacted]
Farah Kleit, Gender Youth and Inclusion Learning Officer (EnCompass)	[redacted]
Amer Haddad, Editor (EnCompass)	[redacted]
Amanda Stek, Facilitator and MEPL Senior MEL Specialist (EnCompass)	[redacted]
Julio Gerges, Third Party Monitoring Analyst (Management Systems International)	[redacted]
Hussein Zehri, Monitoring Specialist (Management Systems International)	[redacted]

ANNEX 6: EVALUATION TEAM

Team member	Qualifications	Responsibility for this task
James Fremming, Chief of Party - Lebanon (EnCompass)	Chief of Party for USAID's Monitoring and Evaluation Program for Lebanon (MEPL), implemented by EnCompass LLC	Will maintain primary contact with USAID Lebanon country mission and insure the final delivery of evaluation.
Nour El Zaouk, Data Analyst (EnCompass)	Public health practitioner, specialized in health promotion and community health.	Will participate in designing, implementing, and analyzing the evaluation plan. Will support the team in planning the methodology for data collection, management, and analysis. Will conduct quality assurance reviews of presented tools, data and reports; coordinate ethics review; and facilitate the data analysis integration and synthesis workshop with the team.
Dr. Imad Salamey, Team Lead (Independent Consultant)	Associate Professor of Political Science. Senior MEL consultant. Delivered and led several evaluation teams for USAID.	Will work under the direct supervision of the Chief of Party and in close collaboration with the MEPL team to coordinate and implement all evaluation activities.
Stephanie Bassil, Research and Evaluation Specialist (EnCompass)	Managed several evaluations while working with the Norwegian Refugee Council	Will contribute to all phases of the evaluation in collaboration with the team leader and the rest of the team, under the supervision of the Chief of Party.
Dr. Pragati Godbole, (EnCompass)	Project Management, Research & Assessment, Quantitative and Qualitative data collection and analysis, Facilitation, Staff Training and Delivery, Grant Writing, Experience with Stata, SPSS, HLM, In-depth familiarity with developing contexts and Issues on Girls' Education in international contexts.	Will provide learning, recommendations, review, help with analysis, and ongoing feedback to the team.
Hiba Shatila, Administrative Support (EnCompass)	EnCompass HR & Procurement Manager	Will support in purchasing items needed for data collection and booking field transportation.
Farah Kleit, Gender Youth and Inclusion Learning Officer (EnCompass)	Gender, Youth and Inclusion Specialist, Gender-Sensitive Evaluation, Gender Analysis, Disaggregated Data Analysis, Staff Training and Workshops Delivery, Adolescent Girls.	Will ensure gender sensitive approach to evaluation.
Amer Haddad, Editor (EnCompass)	Editing Specialist	Will complete required editing of draft evaluation reports prior to submission.
Amanda Stek, Facilitator and MEPL Senior MEL Specialist (EnCompass)	MEL Associate Director	Will facilitate the various tasks among the team members and ensure along the team leader the timely completion of the assigned tasks. Will provide quality assurance to deliverables.

ANNEX 7: REVISED BALADI ACTIVITY RESULTS FRAMEWORK



REVISED BALADI
ACTIVITY RESULTS FI



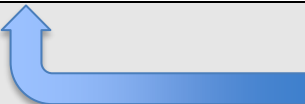

ANNEX 8: BALADI-CL PROJECTS BY PHASE AND CATEGORY

	Type	Number
RFMA Projects		
	School Equipment	1
	Agribusiness	4
	Cultural or Social Center	4
	Solar Power	4
	Tourism or Eco-tourism	4
	Recreational Sport	6
Total		23

	Type	Number
RFCA Projects		
	Computer Equipment/Training	2
	Solar and Recycling Equipment	2
	Psychosocial Support	2
	Agricultural Equipment/Training	4
	School and Special Need Equipment	4
	Kitchen and Sewing Equipment/Training	5
Total		19

ANNEX 9: USAID/LEBANON AND BALADI AIMS AND INDICATORS

Relevance of BALADI Caritas Objectives to USAID's DOs

USAID DO I (CDCS)	Indicators USAID (CDCS)	BALADI Objectives	Indicators BALADI (Mod I6)
Improved capacity of the public sector in providing transparent, quality services across Lebanon		Long-term collaboration between municipalities or unions, NGOs, FBOs, CBOs, and private sector entities to implement and manage community projects and deliver services.	
Mission IR 1.3: Improved sub-national governance in addressing citizens' needs in public service delivery. Sub-IR 1.3.1: More capable municipalities working inclusively with citizens to effectively accomplish local development objectives	* Number of municipalities in partnership with lead NGOs or for-profit private sector entities that are implementing citizen-identified projects, as a result of USG assistance * Percentage increase in customer satisfaction with public services in areas receiving USG assistance Percentage of assisted municipalities that have improved internal systems	1. Improve the governance of municipalities and improve public service delivery. 2. Establish sustainable local social capital 3. Fulfil urgent needs of vulnerable communities	Ind 3.1.a: Number of public sector initiatives successfully implemented as a result of USG assistance. Ind 3.1.b: Number of FBOs/NGOs initiatives successfully implemented as a result of USG assistance Ind 3.2: Number of projects with proof of sustainability or other equally effective documents based on the projects' nature. 
Mission IR 1.4: Strengthened civil society contributing effectively to participatory and democratic governance. Sub-IR 1.4.1: Citizens' concerns increasingly addressed through CSO initiatives	* Number of USAID-assisted local CSOs engaged in community, regional and national programs (broken down by women-run versus other NGOs, and percentage of women compared to men in CSOs engaged in programs)  * Number of citizens engaged in local and national advocacy activities * Percentage of citizens who feel that their concerns are well-represented by civil society organizations	 	Ind 4.1.b: Number of FBOs/NGOs demonstrating citizens' participatory approach in their submitted applications Ind 4.2 Number of Community committee members representing different sectors or backgrounds, and engaged in long-term overseeing of the management and operation of community projects Ind 4.3 Number of capacity building activities conducted as a result of USG assistance

ANNEX 10: CHALLENGES FACING RFCA IMPLEMENTATION

Project	Category of Funding	Observed challenges	Implementation
[redacted]	Livelihood and Protection programs	* Outcomes cannot be measured * multiple donors, some are much larger than BALADI, so could not dedicate much time to communication and reporting * trained emergency team discontinued * project lacks follow-up.	(blue)
[redacted]	Provision of equipment and materials	* Outcomes cannot be measured * intermediary role complicates reporting procedure * lacks purpose * lacks follow up.	(green)
[redacted]	Provision of equipment and materials and Vocational training and capacity building programs	* Fuel cost limits operation to short hours and challenges participation* training and staffing require continuous funding * market competition needs alternative modality of cooperative production *GBV sessions have no clear impacts * original objectives are overly ambitious *risks political capture * project lacks follow up.	(blue)
[redacted]	Provision of equipment and materials and Vocational training and capacity building programs	* Fuel cost complicated participation in practical sessions * trainee expectations regarding the ownership of tools were not clearly communicated * selection of participants was not clear * project lacks follow-up * project lacks linkages with other USAID projects.	(orange)
[redacted]	Livelihood and Protection programs	* Project is tied to other externally funded component (packaging) * fuel cost is a major challenge to operation * access to overseas market is a serious challenge * lacks follow up * lacks linkages with other USAID projects.	(green)
[redacted]	Provision of equipment and materials (Agriculture, vocational training, etc....)	* Fuel cost interrupted and shortened operation * lacks follow up.	(green)
[redacted]	Provision of equipment and materials (Agriculture, vocational training, etc....)	* Lacks follow-up.	(green)
[redacted]	Provision of equipment and materials and Vocational training and capacity building programs	* Hyperinflation and currency fluctuation disrupted pricing * fuel cost complicated operations and participation *External bans undermine export opportunity * project lacks linkages with other USAID projects * project lacks follow-up.	(blue)
[redacted]	Small-scale renovation and rehabilitation work	* Challenged by rising fuel cost and limited operation * lacks linkages to other programmatic components * lacks linkages with other USAID projects *lacks follow up.	(green)
[redacted]	Vocational Training and Economic Empowerment	* Project did not demonstrate ability to employ nor to intern participants * Beneficiary is now equipped with a lab, but without strategic planning to sustain its use * fuel cost undermine coverage * project lacks follow-up *project lacks linkages with other USAID projects.	(blue)

Green: Satisfactory implementation,

Blue: Semi-satisfactory Implementation,

Orange: Implementation facing difficulties.

ANNEX I I: CHALLENGES FACING RFMA SUSTAINABILITY

Project	Category Funding	Proposed concept	Current Status	Observed challenges to sustainability
[redacted]	Agribusiness	Construction of a cold storage facility to help the farmers store their crops and sell them during the off-season.	Operational	*Diesel fuel cost * operation and maintenance cost *space management *export bans *political capture * lack of linkages to other USAID projects
[redacted]	Recreational Sport	Rehabilitation of Sports Court, and the establishment of a kiosk, dressing rooms, rest rooms...	Operational	*Diesel fuel cost * operational and maintenance cost * *space management *neighborhood complaints *lack of reach to girls * lack of linkages to other USAID projects.
[redacted]	Tourism and Eco-tourism	Establishment of a hiking trail	Semi-operational	* Fuel and transportation cost * low visibility * lack of interest by municipality to attract outsiders * disconnected from local businesses * lack of linkages to other USAID projects.
[redacted]	Solar Power	Installation of three solar stations of 227 panels providing 60 KW of electricity and a generator	Not operational	* Diesel fuel cost * operation and maintenance cost * outdated technology *management challenges.

ANNEX 12: RELEVANT RFMA PROJECTS IN A CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT

Sustainability Failure, [redacted] Solar Power Project

In 2018 BALADI succeeded in installing solar power systems in the town aimed to supply electricity to around 200 houses, thus reducing residents' utility bills and providing day-light saving. The design of the project went into several stages, from initially aiming to provide individual houses with solar pallets to, later, establishing a centralized solar power station for the town. The solar power was supposed to run in parallel with a diesel-run power generator to sufficiently provide electricity to 200 homes. The beneficiaries were those of an economically marginalized community, including residents with disabilities, a church, a religious center, a school, and a community house. It was expected that residents will gain 30% cost saving out of the project. This project was very relevant to USAID's DO1 and DO2, as it established a partnership between the municipality and the various local organizations and promised long-term sustainability. Following the 2020 economic crash and the rising fuel cost, running the diesel generator during day time proved no longer cost-efficient for the municipality. The municipality decided to stop the entire solar project while allocating the diesel-run generator to night-time electricity supply. This decision was driven by the intention to save on diesel fuel for the night. Only through installing solar-powered batteries to store daylight energy to be released at night that the project would have appeared relevant. However, solar batteries are not only beyond the price reach of the municipality, but also extremely hazardous and risk explosion. Still, by 2022, technology has advanced beyond the already installed Chinese-made model solar pallets, rendering them inefficient even if they were to be utilized.

Sustainability at Risk, [redacted] Refrigerator Project

In 2018 multiple refrigerators were installed for the municipality of [redacted] to store farmers' overproduced season fruits, mainly apples. This was to support local farmers in maintaining market reach throughout the year. The refrigerators are powered by public electricity in parallel with diesel-power generator and Chinese-made solar pallets. The project appeared promising in meeting DOs and supporting local farmers. Following the 2020 economic crash and the rising fuel cost alongside blackout, running the diesel generator around the clock increased operation cost multi-folds. The revenues hardly meet the cost. The project was in jeopardy. Additional challenges included the management of the storage while deciding on beneficiaries and the distribution of refrigerator spaces. Sustainability is now risking changing mayor or being politically captured by municipal leaders, but most importantly it remains vulnerable to fluctuating market prices and the ability of farmer cooperatives to export products for urgently needed cash to cover the cost.

Sustainability in Shortage, [redacted] Hiking Trail Project

In 2015, BALADI completed a bicycle and a hiking trail on a land donated by the municipality of [redacted]. The project appeared sustainable for being established on public property while running a low maintenance cost. It was expected that the project would attract a large number of ecotourists from around the region. Yet, the municipality appeared to have lost interest in the project. The reason lies in the fact that the municipality could not identify many benefits in attracting hikers to town. Limited gains are anticipated by a few businesses, such as wineries and bakeries, but the municipality appeared least enthusiastic, as it seems to have weighed the cost against the benefits of ecotourism. Local private businesses have not been able to capture such an opportunity to partner with municipality to increase business.

Sustainability at Risk, [redacted] Soccer Field

The municipality has decided to renovate a soccer field on its property, located at the historic "Green-line" that divided the Muslim from Christian neighborhoods during the 1975 Lebanese Civil War. It is estimated that the soccer field's property is worth more than 24 million USD and owned by the municipality. Original renovation intentions, costing around 500,000 US dollars, meant to provide the youth of surrounding areas with the opportunity to use the field for sport activities, thus alleviating drug use and encouraging interactions between the different social groups. Beneficiaries were envisioned as evenly divided between girls and boys. The project was to benefit the employment of supporting staff in relevant facilities, such as the cafeteria. Project sustainability and field maintenance were critically linked to revenue generated from rent and cafeteria sale. The project faced several challenges since its inception in 2018, starting with the COVID-19 curfew and the 2020 economic meltdown. The project thus endured rising fuel prices and currency devaluation, which rendered it impossible to extend night operation. The initiative also faced difficulties in attracting girl players or women employees. At current operating capacity, the field generates monthly income of approximately \$2,000 of rent per

month, but this amount is barely sufficient to cover field maintenance, wages of six staff, and pay for fuel cost.²¹ The dilemma is whether to increase capacity use through an additional investment that installs solar power and generates night light, or builds a rain-proof court facility, constructs a fan stadium, and increases outreach to maximum use throughout the week or, alternatively, maintains a minimal capacity use and avoids overcrowding, management, and maintenance cost. At the moment conservative approach is prevailing. What is questionable is whether this recreation sport project is replicable to other municipalities given the required city property allocation and field's renovation, maintenance, and operation cost.

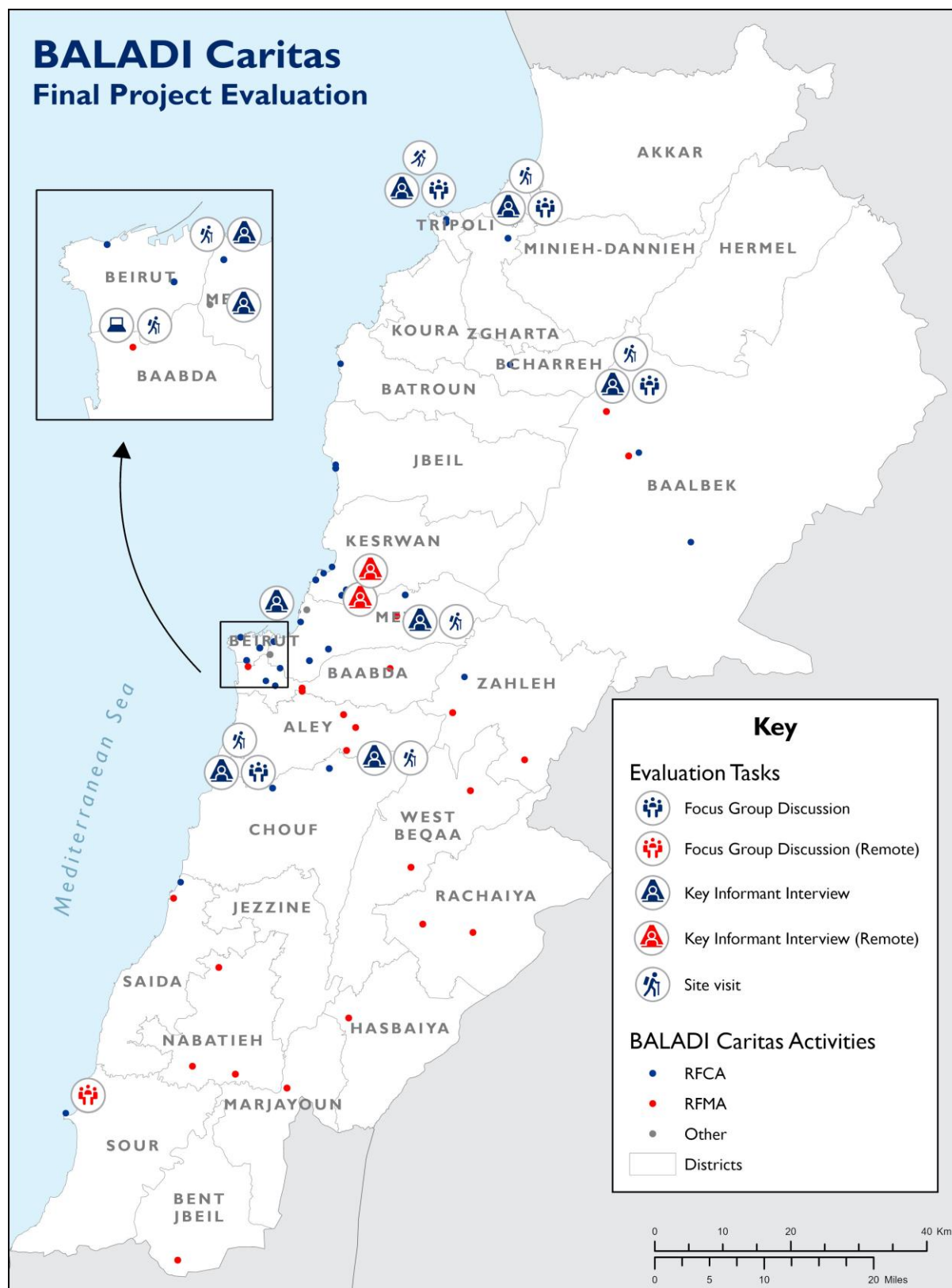
²¹ The amount is calculated based on hourly rent estimated at 600,000 LL per hour or \$21 @ 28,000LL exchange for the dollar. The current schedule of occupancy shows 6 hours operation at half capacity during 5 working days, generating monthly income of approximately 6 hours x \$12.5 x 20 days = \$1,500. There could be additional income generated from storage, equipment rent, and cafeteria of about \$500/month.

ANNEX 13: BALADI-CL INDICATOR TRACKING TABLE UP TO Q1FY2022

Indicator Name	Total Target	Total Achieved	Comment
1.1 : Number of citizens benefiting from USG supported municipalities, NGOs/FBOs	80,400	80,310	Target met
1.2: Number of USAID-assisted local CSOs engaged in community, regional and national programs.	40	41	Target met
2.1.a: Number of municipalities that are implementing citizen-identified projects, as a result of USG assistance.	46	75	Target overachieved
2.1.b: Number FBOs/NGOs, that are implementing citizen-identified projects, as a result of USG assistance	24	20	Target underachieved
2.2 Number of USG-supported municipalities with improved public services as perceived by community opinion leaders	46	n/a	N/a
3.1 a: Number of public sector initiatives successfully implemented as a result of USG assistance	23	23	Target met
3.1 b: Number of FBOs/NGOs initiatives successfully implemented as a result of USG assistance	24	11	Target underachieved
3.2: Number of projects with proof of sustainability or other equally effective documents based on the projects' nature.	47	21	Target underachieved
4.1 a: Number of municipalities demonstrating citizens' participatory approach in their submitted applications	104	114	Target met
4.1 b: Number of NGOs/FBOs demonstrating a citizen's participatory approach in their submitted applications	24	19	Target underachieved
4.2: Number of community committee members representing different sectors or backgrounds and engaged in long-term overseeing of the management and operation of community projects.	347	461	Target overachieved
4.3: Number of capacity building activities conducted as a result of USG assistance.	149	151	Target met
5.1: Value of Non-USG funding leveraged or cost-shared into the USG assisted community projects	3,100,000	6,007,004	Target overachieved
5.2: Number of new USG-supported public-private partnerships (PPPs) formed	32	36	Target met

5.3: Number of MSMEs receiving business development services from USG assisted sources	700	562	Target underachieved
6.1: Number of jobs created by USAID interventions	76	61	Target underachieved
6.2: Proportion of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment) (GNDR-2)	40%	60%	Target overachieved
7.1: Number of microenterprises supported by USG enterprise assistance	635	554	Target underachieved
8.1: Number of Participating communities' committees that have women and/or youth (16-30) permanent representatives	20	26	Target met
8.2: Number of USG-supported local governments and villages with communities impacted by Syrian refugees' presence	28	67	Target overachieved
8.3: Number of women empowerment practices adopted through USG assistance.	202	165	Target underachieved
8.4: Total number of Beneficiaries of USAID supported multi-Community service delivery programs	81,176	80,933	Target met
Youth-1: Number of youths trained in social or leadership skills through USG assisted programs	2100	350	Target underachieved

ANNEX I4: DATA COLLECTION LOCATIONS AND TYPE





USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE