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**Mediterranean
Action Plan**
Barcelona
Convention

20 January 2023
English only

Third (Interim) Steering Committee Meeting of the EU-funded Marine Litter MED II Project

Istanbul, Türkiye, 8 February 2023

Agenda Item 3: Progress on Marine Litter MED II Project Implementation

Report of the Consultation Meeting on selected single-use plastic products on-the-go food and beverage packaging and bags. Joint WES and Marine Litter MED II Projects Activity co-organised with the Ministry of Environment of Lebanon

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UNEP/MAP
Athens, 2023



Joint WES and Marine Litter MED II Projects Activity
co-organised with the Ministry of Environment of Lebanon

Report of the Consultation Meeting on selected single-use plastic products
on-the-go food and beverage packaging and bags

Thursday 17 November 2022

08:45 – 15:00

Venue: Ministry of Environment, Azarieh Bld, 7th floor, Green Room, Beirut

1. GENERAL BACKGROUND

The WES Project

The EU funded "Water and Environment Support (WES) in the ENI Neighbourhood South Region" project is a regional technical support project. WES project aims to protect the natural resources in the Mediterranean context and to improve the management of scarce water resources. WES mainly aims to solve the problems linked to environmental pollution and the unsustainable use of water.

Since March 2022, WES has been providing technical assistance to the Ministry of Environment (MoE) of Lebanon with the common goal of reducing the impact and leakage of Single-Use Plastics (SUPs) into the environment. More specifically, the focus is on analysing the socioeconomic effects of policy measures such as reducing or banning certain single-use plastic products or promoting alternative solutions, including single use, non-plastic alternatives or reuse options; facilitating sector dialogue with key stakeholders; and identifying a nationwide strategy for the gradual ban of SUPs.

This activity (Policy Support to Address SUPs in Lebanon, Activity no. N-E-LB-2B) is implemented with the support and services of MedWaves, MIO-ECSDE and LDK Consultants, and focuses on **selected on-the-go food and beverage single use plastics (SUPs)**.

The Marine Litter MED II Project

Funded by the European Commission, DG Environment, it further supports the implementation of the updated Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean approved by COP 22 at national, sub-regional and regional level with a particular focus on southern Mediterranean countries, namely Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia. The project builds on the outcomes of the EU-funded Marine Litter MED project (2016-2019). It is executed for a duration of 36 months by the UNEP/MAP-Barcelona Convention Secretariat and MAP Components, namely MED POL, MedWaves (former SCP/RAC), SPA/RAC and REMPEC, in line with their respective mandates and areas of expertise.

The overall objective of the Marine Litter MED II project is to reduce and prevent the generation of marine litter in the Mediterranean through an expanded implementation of key reduction and prevention measures as provided for in the updated Regional Plan on Marine Litter Management in the Mediterranean. In the case of Lebanon, focus is on reducing production and consumption of **single-use plastic bags (SUPBs)**.



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2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The objective of this consultation meeting was to present the respective baseline reports from the two cited projects on single-use plastics. In the case of WES, the focus was on selected on-the-go food and beverage SUPs, whereas Marine Litter Med addresses SUPBs. Since the projects are working in synergy and complementarity and address the same key stakeholders, the meeting was organized jointly to amplify impact.

The meeting intended to discuss and gather feedback on the potential policy measures to be implemented in Lebanon for the targeted SUPs. This would be the basis for the development of two roadmaps to tackle those SUPs in the country, the implementation of which will start with WES and Marine Litter Med support to the Ministry of Environment.

Additionally, the meeting tried to reinforce the visibility of alternatives to SUPs. For that, Recycle Lebanon was commissioned to organise a small exhibition at the venue, to showcase what it's already available in the Lebanese market (see pictures below).



3. COURSE OF THE MEETING

A provisional agenda (Annex 1) was circulated to the invitees prior to the meeting., which was followed on the day of the meeting. The full set of the presentations made are provided in Annex 3 to this report.

3.1 INTRODUCTION TO THE MEETING

In a first part, participants were welcomed by Eng. Bassam Sabbagh - Head of Urban Environment Service, Ministry of Environment & WES Environment Focal Point – Lebanon, recalling the importance of plastic pollution in the country and the commitment to tackle it. Next, Mr. Anis Ismail, Environment Key Expert, WES (on-line) introduced the WES project to participants, detailing regional and national activities implemented under WES, including those where Lebanon is involved. Mr. Patrick Wegerdt,



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Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission (on-line) provided a comprehensive presentation of EU policies addressing SUPs, and particularly the SUPs Directive. Finally, Mr. Pedro Fernández, Senior Expert in Plastic Pollution Prevention Measures, WES/MedWaves, introduced the regional context addressing SUPs in the Mediterranean, as well as previous work on the topic in other countries.

3.2 DISCUSSION ABOUT ON-THE-GO FOOD AND BEVERAGE SUPS (referring to WES Project)

A second part of the meeting was devoted to WES baseline report in relation to on-the-go food and beverage SUPs, which was presented by Mr. Sammy Kayed, Senior Environmental Research Expert, WES project. The selected items are: Cutlery, plates and trays; straws and stirrers; drinks cups and cup lids; and food containers including fast food packaging. Potential policy measures were presented as well. Overall, the experts' report suggests a progressive approach to phase out selected SUPs, particularly building from ongoing voluntary actions by businesses and the promotion of alternatives. There was a fluid exchange with the participants, where the situation and initiatives in the country were discussed. The policy measures were the basis for an exercise, facilitated by Mr. Fernández. It was proposed to the participants to select measures that they considered most suitable, and to post them along a timeframe of 5 years (see picture below).

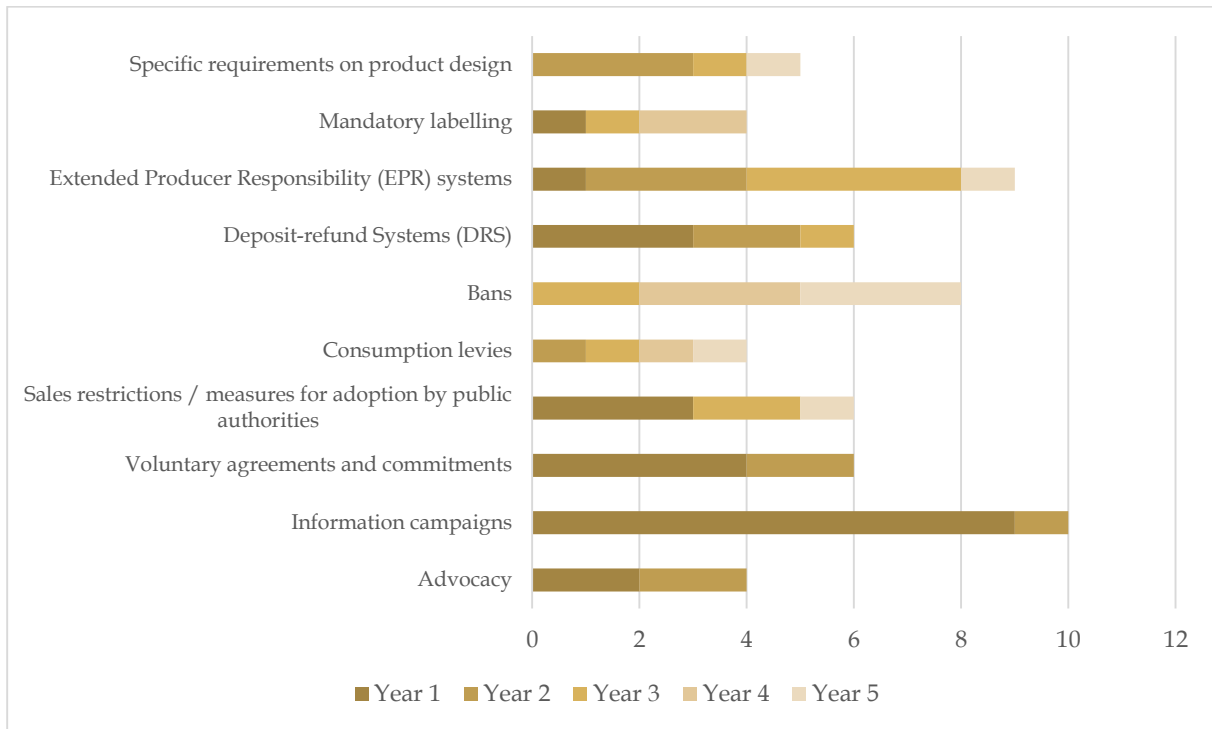


The idea was to convey a message that a progressive approach may be needed, as well as that different yet coexistent measures are possible. Participants posted their choices on a flipchart and some of them shared in plenary their rationale for their choice.

A detailed analysis of the choices follows.



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In the figure above, the content of the post-its was aggregated per measure, though differentiated by year through the colour gradient. This helps understanding the chronological order of the measures to be implemented. Through this exercise, several observations can be made:

- All measures seem relatively relevant, though information campaigns, EPR and bans are the most preferred options.
- Generally, participants followed a progressive approach, starting with softer measures and eventually evolving to harder policies such as bans. There was a generally a good understanding of the measures and the agreement that a progressive approach is needed, also considering the weakness of governmental action at the moment.
- However, some respondents pointed out measures such as EPR or DRS in year 1, which may note the urgency for actions but not consider the pace of the process.
- Interestingly, participants noted measures other than the proposed list, such as working with producers to improve the availability of alternatives, boosting the recyclables market, or reinforcing the control of existing legislation by the public authorities. These measures (and others) are included in the Regional Guidelines on SUPs as “accompanying measures”, which is the basis for WES methodological approach. This is to be noted when proposing a roadmap and its implementation.



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In addition, during the presentation of the baseline report and the proposal of measures by participants, other relevant remarks were made:

- An association is running a programme by which they are providing food to refugees in exchange of plastic waste (it's foreseen to provide training on sorting and compacting plastic waste). Another programme operated by the AUB Neighborhood Initiative certifies restaurants in the Ras Beirut area that give their recyclable waste (namely plastics, glass, cardboard, and aluminium) to recycling entities. A "reward" system seems to work fine in order to increase collection.
- Many participants called for voluntary action with the Ministry's support, rather than going through legal-policy processes.

After the discussion, Mr. Fernández and Mr. Kayed thanked the participants for their active participation and recalled the next phases, which is the drafting of a roadmap in consultation with the MoE, and starting implementation of specific actions.

3.3. DISCUSSION ABOUT SINGLE-USE PLASTIC BAGS (RELATED TO MLM PROJECT)

Similar to the previous section, the third part of the meeting was devoted to the MLM baseline report in relation to single-use plastic bags, which was presented by Mr. Sammy Kayed. The presentation was made with a fluid exchange with the participants, where the situation and initiatives in the country were discussed. Policy measures were presented, particularly as different scenarios that should allow for the reduction in the consumption of SUPBs. This was the basis for another exercise to gather feedback, facilitated by Mr Fernández. In this case, participants were called to select a preferred option out of four, which included:

1. Reward system
 - a. Applied by supermarkets
 - b. Applied by delivery companies
2. Charge on the distribution of SUPBs
 - a. Compulsory charge
 - b. Tax

The picture and figure below show the post-its of participants across the different categories.



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Participants also noted particular implementation aspects.

- Supermarkets should use the revenue of the charge to buy reusable bags and make them available to customers
- The compulsory charge should be used only for environmental activities (e.g., support Solid Waste Management facilities, reduce price of multi-use bags, encourage sorting at source, etc.)
- The rewards could be based on tokens to be exchanged for basic benefits
- The rewards could be points to be exchanged for eco-friendly products
- The rewards system might not be sufficient to achieve a meaningful reduction
- The rewards system may address only certain segments of the population, and not everyone
- One participant referred to a “cost recovery” scheme, by which the commercial sector should pay in a first phase, and households in a later phase, in order to cover costs of waste collection and transport

Other comments made during the session include:

- MoE tried to convince supermarkets to switch to multi-use options, but they didn't commit
- Vegetable and fruit bags should also be considered in the SUPB reduction policy
- The MoE informed that the upcoming tax on import of plastics should increase the production cost of SUPB, which in turn is passed on to consumers, so a reduction in use might be seen



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- The MoE showed openness to include a measure in the legislation through a ministerial decree which may be less stringent but is an easier process than approving a formal law through parliament

The MoE, WES and MLM projects thank the participants for their participation and commitments, who in turn thanked the organisers for the fruitful meeting, and looked forward to future developments under the two projects.

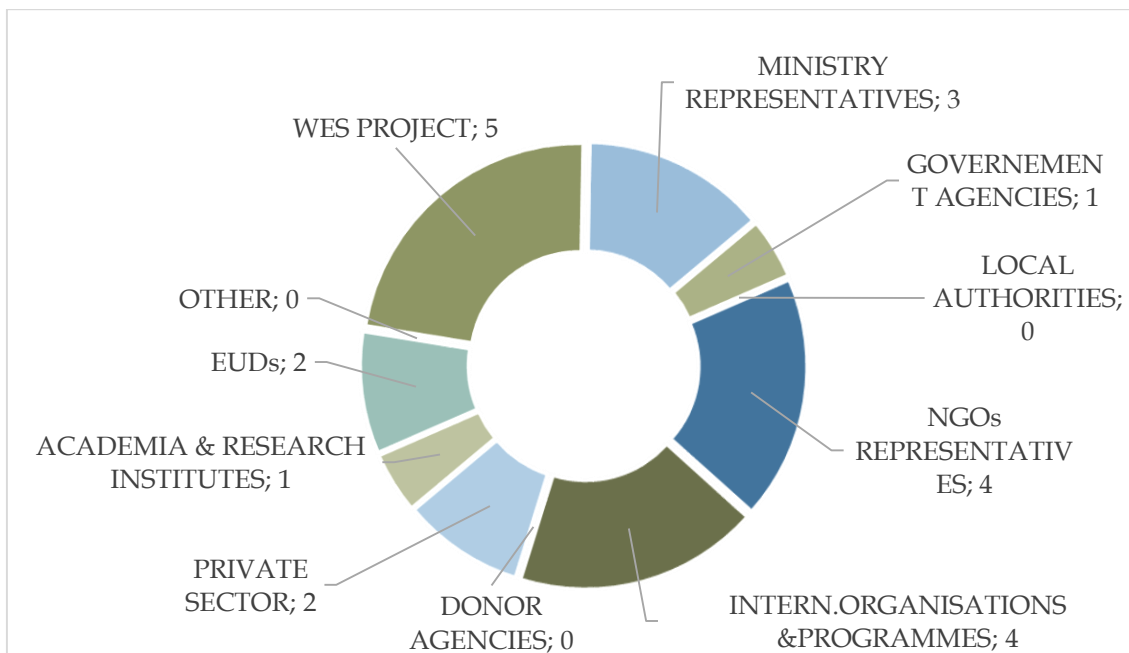
4. PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS AND EVALUATION OF THE EVENT

4.1 PROFILE OF THE PARTICIPANTS

The list of participants can be found as Annex 2 to this report. Generally, participants represented mostly public authorities, international organizations and national NGOs. The absence of Lebanese companies, which are a primary target in these activities should be noted. This will require further work with them through 1-to-1 meetings in the next stages of the activity.



CONSULTATION WORKSHOP DEMOGRAPHICS





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FIGURE 0-1-1: REPRESENTATION OF PARTICIPANTS PER TYPE OF INSTITUTION

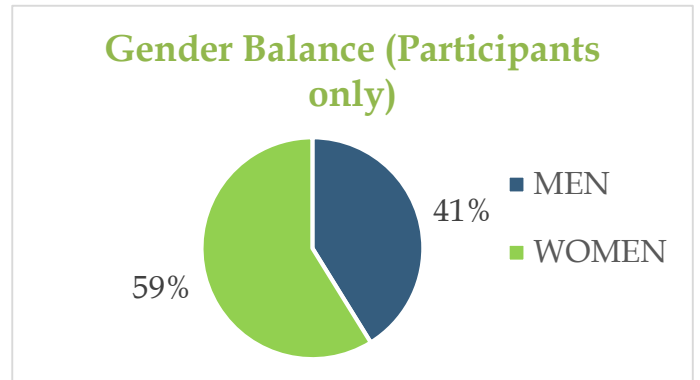
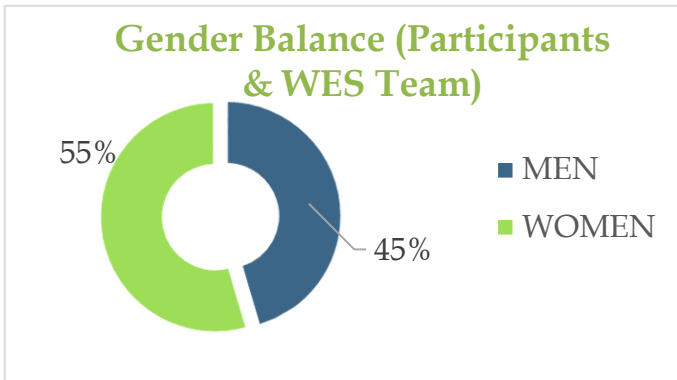


FIGURE 4-1-2: GENDER BALANCE (PARTICIPANTS & WES TEAM)

FIGURE 4-1-3: GENDER BALANCE (PARTICIPANTS ONLY)

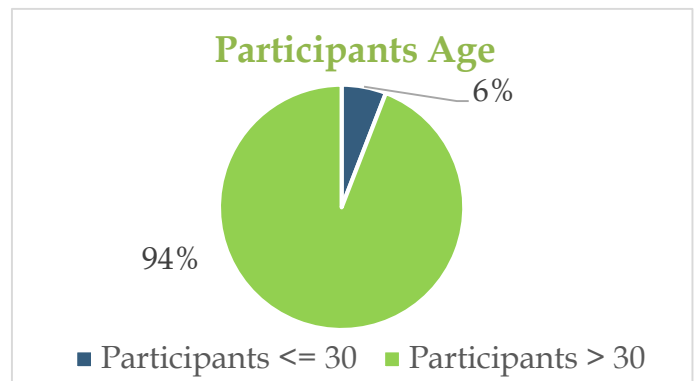
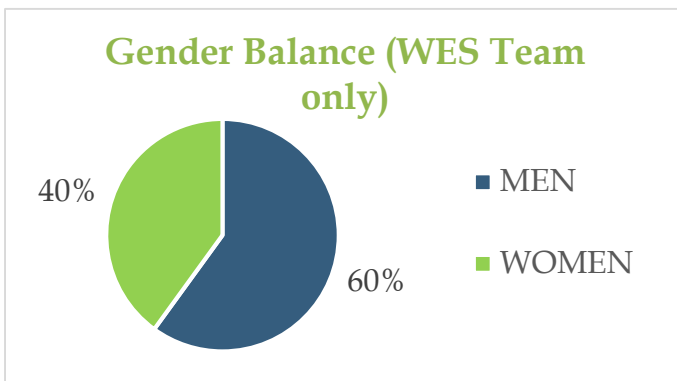


FIGURE 4-1-4: GENDER BALANCE (WES TEAM ONLY)

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4.2 EVALUATION OF THE EVENT

A. ORGANISATIONAL, ADMINISTRATIVE AND PLANNING ISSUES BEFORE AND DURING THE EVENT



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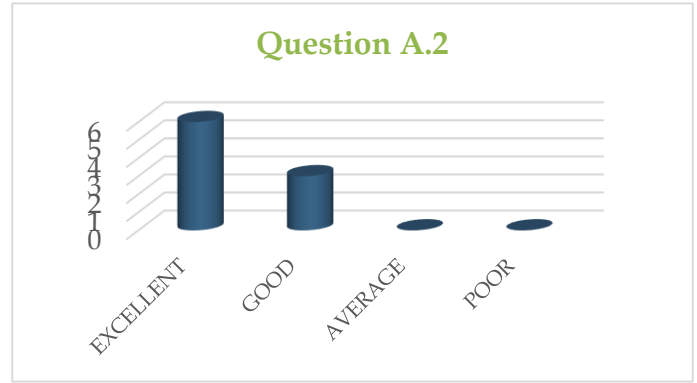
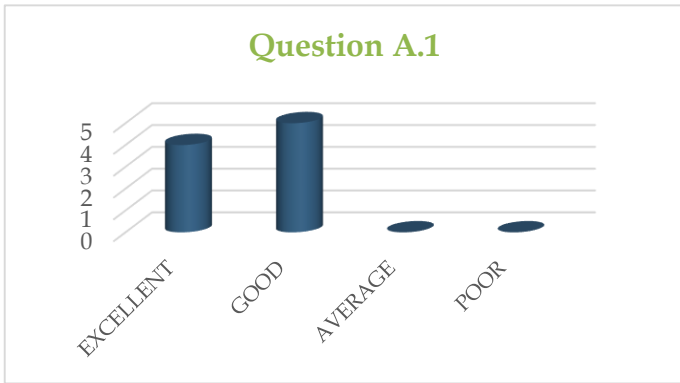


FIGURE 4-2-1: FLOW OF PROGRAMME, HANDLING OF EMERGING NEEDS (A.1)

FIGURE 4-2-2: FLOW OF PROGRAMME, HANDLING OF EMERGING NEEDS (A.2)

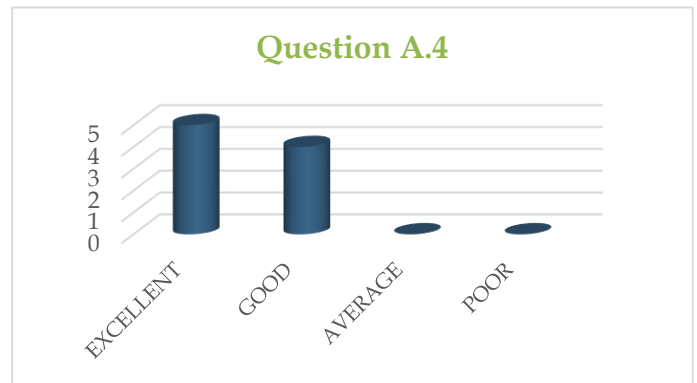
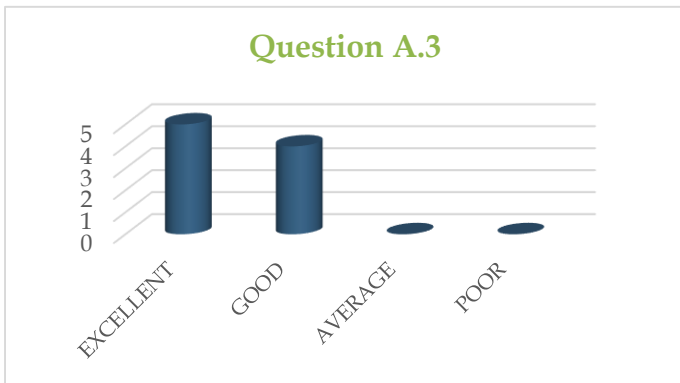


FIGURE 4-2-3: PLANNING OF WORKSHOP: EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION OF OBJECTIVES (A.3)

FIGURE 4-2-4: EVALUATION OF PRESENTATIONS (A.4)

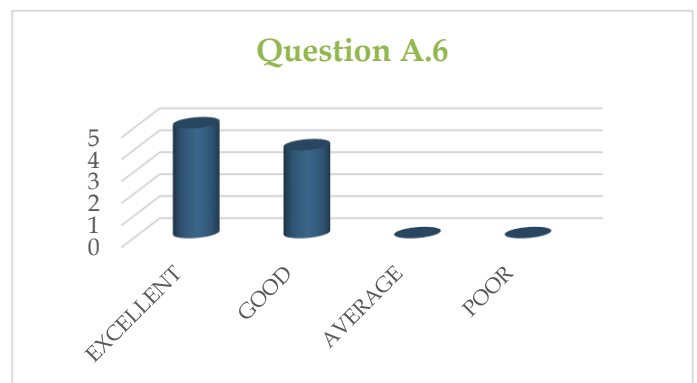
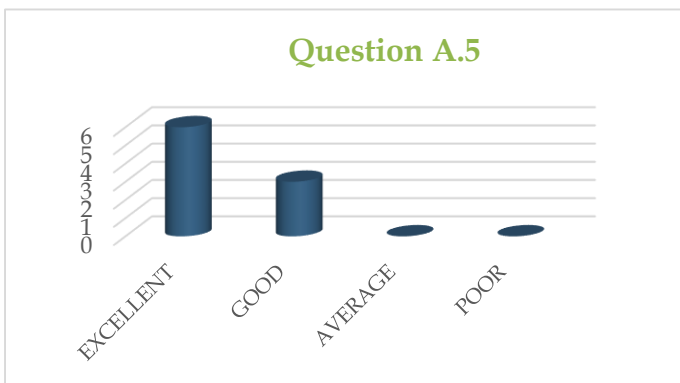


FIGURE 4-2-5: CLARITY, COVERAGE AND SUFFICIENCY OF CONCEPTS, OBJECTIVES, ANTICIPATED OUTPUTS (A.5)

FIGURE 4-2-6: CLARITY, COVERAGE AND SUFFICIENCY OF CONCEPTS, OBJECTIVES, ANTICIPATED OUTPUTS (A.6)



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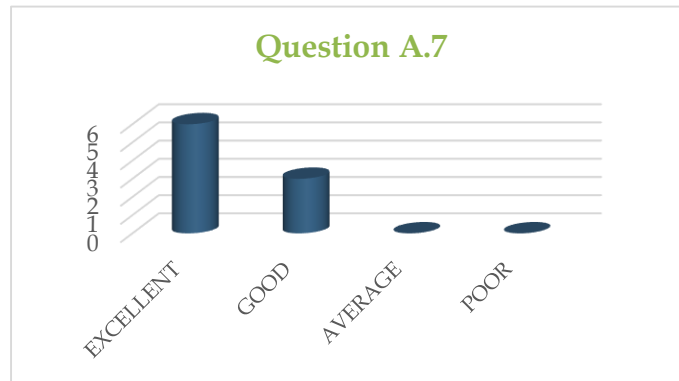


FIGURE 4-2-7: Overall rating of the event (A.7)

B. FEEDBACK BY PARTICIPANTS ON TECHNICAL ASPECTS:

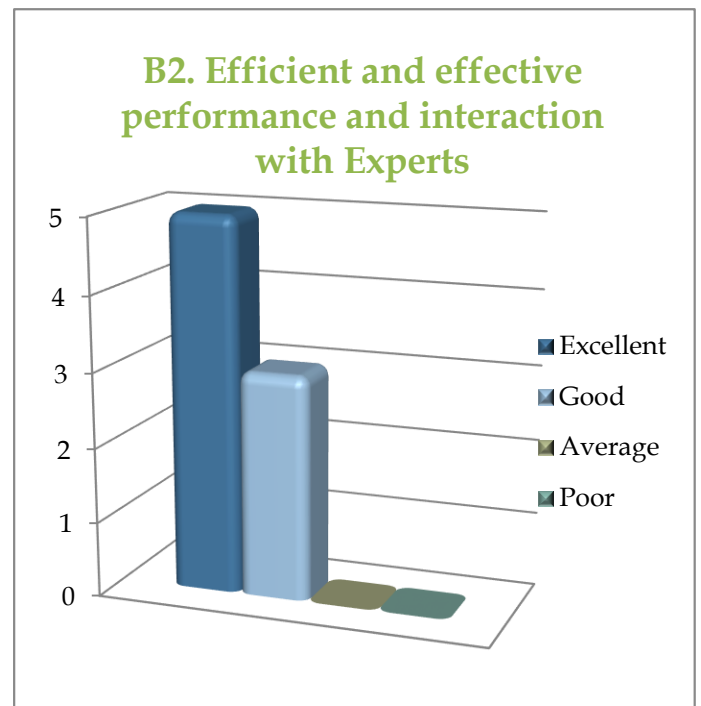


FIGURE 4-2-8: CONSULTATION WORKSHOP COVERAGE (B.1)

FIGURE 4-2-9: EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE PERFORMANCE AND INTERACTION WITH EXPERTS (B.2)



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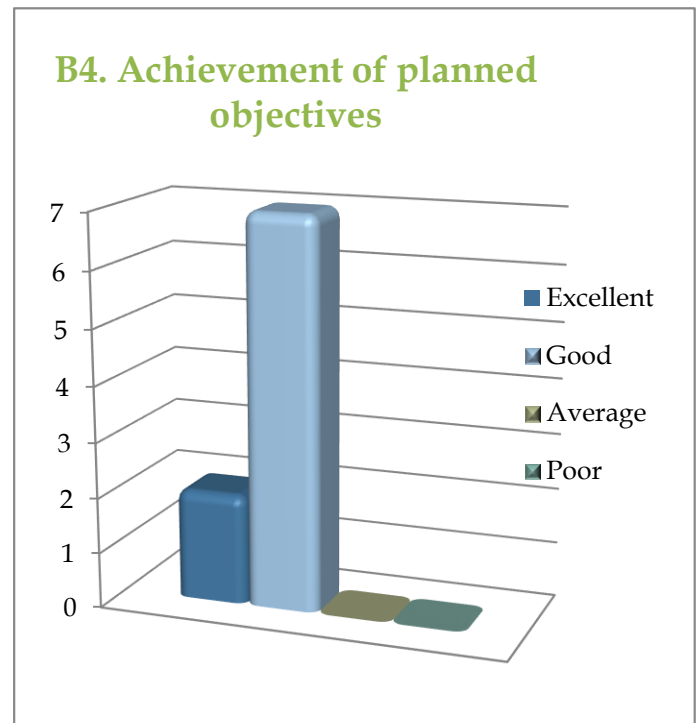


FIGURE 4-2-10: CONSULTATION WORKSHOP LENGTH (B.3)

FIGURE 4-2-11: LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT OF PLANNED OBJECTIVES (B.4)

5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The meeting was fruitful thanks to the active participation of attendants. However, private companies were missing which will require more exchange with them in the upcoming phases. For both topics/projects, the current weaknesses of the government were noted, and therefore if incentivization is reached the leadership may be taken by the private sector, including companies. However, the MoE has a prominent role to play by providing visibility and support to these actions. It was also proposed to dedicate a specific unit at the MoE that can follow up this work. This may be done in connection with the [Pro Blue initiative of World Bank](#).

Next, both baseline reports and the outcomes of this meeting will be discussed with the MoE in order to agree on strategic directions that will guide the WES related SUPs roadmap, as well as for SUPB actions. The roadmap will be later discussed and agreed with the MoE, based on which initial implementation will start by both projects.



ANNEX1. AGENDA OF THE MEETING

08:45 - 09:00	Welcome & Registration
09:00 - 09:40	<p>Opening; Objectives of the meeting; Regional and national contexts addressing single-use plastics (SUPs)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Eng. Bassam Sabbagh - Head of Urban Environment Service, Ministry of Environment & WES Environment Focal Point – Lebanon</i> - <i>Mr. Anis Ismail, Environment Key Expert, WES (on-line)</i> - <i>Mr. Pedro Fernández, Senior Expert in Plastic Pollution Prevention Measures, WES/MedWaves</i> - <i>Mr. Patrick Wegerdt, Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission (on-line)</i>
09:40 – 11:30	<p>Presentation and discussion on the baseline situation in Lebanon and potential policy measures in relation to on-the-go food and beverage SUPs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Presentation by Mr. Sammy Kayed, Senior Environmental Research Expert, WES</i> - <i>Q/A and discussion (50 min): Stakeholders’ views on adequacy and feasibility of the proposed potential policy options for Lebanon</i> - <i>Ensuring Impact through the engagement of the Stakeholders (30 min)</i> <i>Moderation by Mr. Pedro Fernández (circulation of the WES Commitment Form and consultation Evaluation Form)</i>
11:30 – 12:00	Coffee-break
12:00 – 13:30	<p>Current situation with single-use plastic bags and two potential systems to reduce them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Presentation by Mr. Sammy Kayed</i> - <i>Q/A and discussion (60 min): Stakeholders’ views on adequacy and feasibility of the proposed potential policy options for Lebanon</i>
13:30 – 14:00	<p>Conclusions and next steps</p> <p><i>Eng. Bassam Sabbagh and Mr. Pedro Fernández</i></p>
14:00 – 15:00	Lunch



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ANNEX 2. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

COUNTRY	TYPE OF INSTITUTION (please use the options provided*)	TITLE (Mr/ Ms)	FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	POSITION/ FUNCTION	ORGANISATION/ INSTITUTION
PARTICIPANTS						
BELGIUM	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Mr	Patrick	WEGERDT	Desk Officer	Directorate-General for Environment, European Commission
LEBANON	EUROPEAN UNION DELEGATION (EUD)	Mr.	Jihad	JRADI	Programme Manager	Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon
LEBANON	MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVES	Mr.	Bassam	SABBAGH	Head of Urban Environment Service, WES Focal Point - Lebanon	Ministry of Environment
LEBANON	MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVES	Ms	Jamila	AL HADI	Environmental Engineer	Ministry of Environment
LEBANON	MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVES	Ms	Rasha	KANJ	Head of Department	Ministry of Environment
LEBANON	INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND PROGRAMMES	Ms	Lama	MGHAMES	Senior Environmental Consultant	World Bank
LEBANON	INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND PROGRAMMES	Mr	Rami	NASSIF	Project Manager	UNDP
LEBANON	INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND PROGRAMMES	Mr	Georges	ABI SLEIMAN	Environmental Architect	UN-HABITAT
LEBANON	INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND PROGRAMMES	Ms	Kim	DE MIGUEL	Project Manager	MedWaves
LEBANON	GOVERNMENT AGENCIES	Mr	Ali	MAJED	Head of Quality and environmental department	Association of Lebanese Industrialists
LEBANON	NGOs REPRESENTATIVES	Ms	Nirma	HAMDAN	Ecosale Manager	Recycle Lebanon
LEBANON	NGOs REPRESENTATIVES	Ms	Joslin	KEHDY	Founder	Recycle Lebanon
LEBANON	NGOs REPRESENTATIVES	Ms	Iman	ASSAF	Director	Ahla Fawda
LEBANON	NGOs REPRESENTATIVES	Ms	Sara	BOUKAMEL	Brand Member	TERRE Liban
LEBANON	ACADEMIA AND RESEARCH INSTITUTES	Ms	Mona	AL HALLAK	Director	AUB Neighborhood initiative
SPAIN	PRIVATE SECTOR	Mr	Peter	WOUTERS	Director	Ramboll



Water and Environment Support
in the ENI Southern Neighbourhood region



Marine Litter MED II



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SPAIN	PRIVATE SECTOR	Ms	Ana I.	SANCHEZ	Senior Consultant	Ramboll
WES TEAM						
TUNISIA	WES PROJECT	Mr.	Anis	ISMAIL	Key Environmental Expert	WES Project
SPAIN	WES PROJECT	Mr.	Pedro	FERNANDEZ	Senior International Non-Key Expert in Plastic Pollution Prevention Measures	WES Project
LEBANON	WES PROJECT	Mr.	Sammy	KAYED	Senior Environmental Research Non-Key Expert	WES Project
GREECE	WES PROJECT	Ms	Danai	AMPLIANITI	Project Officer / WES backstopping	MIO-ECSDE / WES Project
GREECE	WES PROJECT	Ms	Alaa	ABOU DAHER	Project Officer / WES backstopping	MIO-ECSDE / WES Project



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ANNEX 3. PRESENTATIONS OF THE MEETING

The presentations of this consultation meeting can be downloaded from the WES website at:

https://www.wes-med.eu/activities_type/n-e-lb-2b-policy-support-to-address-single-use-plastic-items-in-lebanon/