



RURAL TOURISM INITIATIVE AT KAWKABA – PHOTO BY CL TEAM

BUILDING ALLIANCES FOR LOCAL ADVANCEMENT, DEVELOPMENT, AND INVESTMENT – CARITAS LEBANON (B/CL) FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION FINAL REPORT

February 2020

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ABSTRACT

This report presents findings and recommendations from the final performance evaluation of the BALADI Core activity implemented by Caritas Lebanon (CL) to improve the governance of municipalities and public service delivery; and establish sustainable local social capital. BALADI/CL's relevance, efficiency, extent of women's participation, and likelihood of sustained results are examined to provide conclusions and recommendations to inform future activities.

The evaluation shows that BALADI/CL achieved good results in improving services and creating economic opportunities, although more time and resources than planned were spent to identify, design, and implement construction projects due to BALADI/CL's inexperience in managing construction projects and gaps in technical expertise in A&E, construction management, M&E, outreach and communications, program management. The overwhelming demands of the construction projects left fewer resources to pursue improved governance and sustainable local social capital. Positive factors included adding architecture and engineering quality controls and the resourcefulness of the mayors to secure additional cost-share funds needed to complete the projects. In the future, USAID should more clearly state expectations for sub-awards in its request for applications and could allow longer start-up timeline; implementers should improve MOUs with municipalities, design a more streamlined sub-award program and dedicate more resources to it, and provide more gender-specific training to their staff, partners and beneficiaries to highlight gender gaps and sensitize them to gender issues to increase impacts and sustainability.

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ACRONYM LIST

A&E	Architecture and Engineering
AOR	Agreement Officer Representative
BALADI	Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development and Investment
BALADI Core	Three similar cooperative agreements awarded to make grants for municipal projects. Includes B/CL, BALADI/RMF implemented by the Rene Moawad Foundation, and an award to Hariri Foundation that was subsequently cancelled.
B/CL	One of the three BALADI Core cooperative agreements, implemented by Caritas Lebanon (CL)
BALADI CAP	A cooperative agreement in the BALADI “family” designed to support civil society and build municipal capacity
BALADI/RMF	One of the three BALADI Core cooperative agreements, implemented by Renee Moawad Foundation
BALADI Plus	A BALADI program to build capacity in municipalities to implement local development projects and better manage their resources
CA	Cooperative Agreement
CBO	Community-based Organization
CDCS	Country Development Cooperation Strategy
CL	Caritas Lebanon
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
DO	Development Objective
EQ	Evaluation Question
ET	Evaluation Team
FAA	Fixed Award Agreement
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Fiscal Year (USAID Oct 1 to Sept 30)
HF	Hariri Foundation
IP	Implementing Partner
IPW	Institute of Progressive Women
IR	Intermediate Result
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
O&C	Outreach and Communications
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
PMSPL II	Performance Management and Support Program for Lebanon

PPP	Public Private Partnership
QA/QC	Quality Assurance/Quality Control
RFA	Request for Applications
RMF	Rene Moawad Foundation
SI	Social Impact
SOW	Scope of Work
STTA	Short-Term Technical Assistance
TL	Terre Liban
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USG	United States Government

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Caritas Lebanon (CL) was one of three organizations awarded cooperative agreements in 2012 by USAID/Lebanon to implement the “Core services” of the Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development and Investment (BALADI) program to advance long-term collaboration between municipalities or municipal unions, NGOs, and private sector entities to implement and manage community projects and deliver services. At the center of the US\$13M BALADI/CL (B/CL) program was a grant fund for municipal projects. By the time of this evaluation, BALADI/CL’s (B/CL) contract was expected to end in February 2020.

USAID/Lebanon requested the Performance Management and Support Program for Lebanon (PMSPL II) implemented by Social Impact (SI) to conduct a final performance evaluation to address the following evaluation questions:

1. To what extent B/CL is contributing to USAID’s Development Objectives: Improved capacity of the public sector in providing transparent, quality services across Lebanon (DO1); and, Inclusive economic growth enhanced (DO2)?
2. To what extent has B/CL achieved the activity’s goal and objectives? What factors have contributed or hindered the achievement (or non-achievement) of the activity’s objectives?
3. At what level were women involved in the supported communities where the activities were implemented?
4. What is the likelihood that the results B/CL has achieved are sustainable beyond the life of the activity?
5. What were the critical challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations from this program?

EVALUATION METHODS

The evaluation team reviewed documents and performance indicator data, conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) with 26 participants, held two focus group discussions (FGDs) with beneficiaries, and visited ten of B/CL’s 23 projects. Information was collated and compared to distill key findings and conclusions supported by evidence triangulated from multiple sources. The evaluation was conducted during October – December 2019. Refer to Annex 2 for detailed Evaluation Methodology.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Evaluation Question 1: Improved capacity of the public sector in providing transparent, quality services across Lebanon (DO1); and, inclusive economic growth enhanced (DO2)?

The program was aligned with USAID’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), and the activities of B/CL were, accordingly, focused on helping targeted communities to implement public service and economic development projects. All the projects improved local services relevant to the implemented initiatives (DO1), and some created jobs and increased local economic opportunities (DO2).

Evaluation Question 2: To what extent has B/CL achieved the activity’s goal and objectives? What factors have contributed or hindered the achievement (or non-achievement) of the activity’s objectives?

The improved services and economic opportunities are the program's most significant outcomes. However, B/CL encountered and eventually surmounted many challenges which include an inadequate staffing plan as well as inexperienced management and technical staff in the early years. These difficulties led to slow selection of projects as well as inability to manage construction projects that constituted 90 percent of its portfolio and resolve technical and quality issues on time. Weak construction contractors working with insufficient B/CL supervision resulted in a slow pace and some flawed work that needed remediation. B/CL's cost estimates and schedules included in the MOUs, especially in the first batch of projects selected, proved inaccurate with the main burden of cost overruns falling on the municipalities. Also, several of its projects faced delays when newly elected mayors questioned or showed less interest in the projects they "inherited," and one was re-scoped to satisfy the new mayor.

Two positive factors helped B/CL overcome these challenges. With USAID introducing close Construction Quality Assurance over all construction elements under the cooperative agreement, B/CL revamped its architectural and engineering (A&E) approach and staff, which improved project designs and construction quality. This took time, but improved compliance with design, construction, environment and safety standards, reduced risks and mitigated or prevented further construction errors. Second, the persistence and commitment of the collaborating mayors, and their resourcefulness in finding extra funding constitute a critical success factor.

However, only modest results were achieved toward expected outcomes in governance and social capital development. Some projects were innovative, such as the solar power projects that reduce fossil fuel consumption and electricity costs. Caritas' own growth into a more capable USAID implementing partner, though painful at times, is counted as a significant positive outcome.

Evaluation Question 3: At what level were women involved in the supported communities where the activities were implemented?

Women were moderately involved in identifying and designing the projects and are responsible for managing some of the completed facilities. They served on steering committees during the construction phase, but with fewer responsibilities because most decisions were made by the mayors (all 23 mayors are men), and because construction jobs are heavily male-dominated. Two of the ten mayors interviewed said that women were not involved at all.

Roughly equal numbers of men and women benefit from most of the projects. The project with the highest share of reported women beneficiaries (68 percent) is the food processing facility at Anjar. The projects with the lowest share of women beneficiaries, at around ten percent, are two sports or recreational facilities and one cold storage unit used by fruit growers.

Evaluation Question 4: What is the likelihood that the results B/CL has achieved are sustainable beyond the life of the activity?

Most of the projects were completed recently so there is little experience from which to assess income and expenses, usage rates, and funding flows. However, there is cause for optimism. Some managers reported high usage rates, and five of the ten mayors interviewed stated their interest to expand the facilities.

Evaluation Question 5: What were the critical challenges, and lessons learned and recommendations from this program?

Lessons learnt primarily stem from B/CL's challenges in selecting projects and managing construction projects owing to gaps in its technical expertise and managerial inexperience in the construction field, as discussed above, and lead to the following recommendations for future programs.

USAID should refine and clarify expectations in its RFA and CA to improve the quality of technical approaches prepared by offerors. This will help the winning IPs to be better prepared to start fast on a sure footing. For example, an owner's representative is needed when the owner – in this case USAID and the municipalities -- is unable to perform regular, QA/QC expert oversight. On B/CL, the construction projects started before this function was understood or in place. RFAs could describe this function or ask offerors to describe a suitable approach of their own.

While B/CL's proposed work plan echoed the target stated in the RFA to quickly launch the first grant cycle, it could not be achieved since more time and resources were needed to establish a competent team. USAID should encourage and enable the national IP to field seasoned short-term experts at start-up to help orient and train staff, establish protocols and systems, templates and databases and other management and administrative systems specifically dedicated to the project being implemented. Although the ET considers the allocated start-up too short, the ET suggests that within the scope of BALADI/RMF evaluation, USAID compares the implementation progress between B/CL and BALADI/RMF to decide if a longer start-up should be adopted to strengthen the prime national IPs, especially for execution of large or complex programs.

IPs should ensure that MOUs with municipalities adequately define their roles and responsibilities, estimate costs and schedules more accurately, and define an equitable sharing of costs and risks between the parties.

IPs should pre-test the sub-award program through workshops with staff and municipal leaders to improve the sub-grant rules and eligibility requirements, the selection criteria and process, and to provide information to illustrate creative projects and partnering approaches. Conducting rapid needs assessment jointly with municipal board members or staff to review priorities and identify projects that serve diverse beneficiaries will also help. Also, to accelerate the sub-awards, a two-stage process can be used with an initial screening based on a simpler concept note and then a negotiation memo to guide detailed second stage applications.

IPs should hand over operational projects at least six months before close-out so there is time to assist with the transition to regular operations and monitor sustainability plans.

IPs should provide more gender-specific training to sensitize program staff, partners and beneficiaries to gender gaps, to better comply with the mandatory Gender Equality and Female Empowerment (GE/FE) policy, and make sure gender is appropriately integrated in the project from inception to end. Sub-award budgets should be required to allocate funds to promote services to women and train women who manage or use them.

I. INTRODUCTION

In 2012 the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded three cooperative agreements to Rene Moawad Foundation (RMF), Hariri Foundation (HF), and Caritas Lebanon (CL) to implement the “Core services” of the Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development and Investment (BALADI) program.¹ The three agreements started with an aggregate value of \$27 million over five years; from September 30, 2012 to September 29, 2017. At HF’s request, its agreement was terminated after one year. The agreements for CL and RMF, respectively, were extended through February 2020 and September 2020.

BALADI/CL (B/CL) had a total budget of \$12,928,203 for work in 13 districts: Aley, Metn, Baabda, Hermel, Baalbeck, Rachaya, West Bekaa, Zahle, Hasbaya, Nabatieh, Tyre, Bint Jbeil, and Marjeyoun; as well as to implement the Saida Stadium project which was shifted to CL from HF.

The main component of BALADI Core was a program of competitive grants for municipal projects that respond to citizens’ needs for governance, public services and economic opportunities. The first request for project applications was opened in February 2013, and the second in January 2015. B/CL selected, awarded and managed 23 sub-grants to 75 municipalities. At the time of this evaluation, two grant projects were not yet fully handed over to the municipalities.

USAID/Lebanon commissioned this evaluation to examine B/CL activities for their relevance, effectiveness, women’s participation, and sustainability. The results are to inform USAID’s annual portfolio review, for future program design, and to inform the activities of implementing partners (IP). The evaluation was conducted during October – December 2019.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM AND USAID’S RESPONSE

THE DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM

Centralized government in Lebanon inhibits local decision-making, service provision, and local economic development initiatives. Scarce public revenues do not meet the needs of communities, resulting in sub-standard public services. Moreover, the government does not encourage broad-based participation in local decision-making. The slow growth of the overall economy² has significantly hampered local economic growth. Furthermore, men dominate municipal leadership positions impeding women’s access to decision making and participation in governance. The significant influx of primarily Syrian refugees since 2013 places additional heavy burdens on “host communities,” though BALADI was not designed to mitigate those impacts.

¹ AID-268-A-12-00004 (to RMF); AID-268-A-12-00006 (HF), and AID-268-A-12-00005 (CL)

² In the eight years before 2011, annual GDP growth averaged 6.3 percent, well above the global average of 3 percent. Since 2011, average annual GDP growth in Lebanon, at 1.4 percent, is half the global average of 2.8 percent. In 2018 Lebanon’s GDP growth rate ranked 180 out of 190 economies. (Source: World Development Indicators, World Bank, October 28, 2019, <<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.KD.ZG>>)

USAID'S RESPONSE

BALADI was aligned to support USAID/Lebanon's 2014-19 Country Development Cooperative Strategy (CDCS), and included: (1) BALADI Core, three similar cooperative agreements with Lebanese NGOs (CL, HF, and RMF), to fund municipal projects that advance Development Objective (DO) 1 "Improved capacity of the public sector in providing transparent, quality services across Lebanon" and DO 2: "Inclusive economic growth enhanced." (2) BALADI Plus, a task order with Management Systems International (MSI) to improve municipal financial, administrative and regulatory systems that ended in August 2014. (3) BALADI CAP, an associate award with MSI to promote civic engagement and build the capacity of CSOs, which runs through 2020, though its civic engagement for democratic governance (CEDG) component ended in September 2019.

BALADI Program Goal: Long-term collaboration between municipalities or unions, NGOs, CBOs, and private sector entities to implement and manage community projects and deliver services.³

BALADI Program Purposes: (1) Improve the governance of municipalities and improve public service delivery. (2) Establish sustainable local social capital. The Intermediate Results (IR) included: more capable municipalities working inclusively with citizens to effectively accomplish local development objectives (IR1), enhanced participatory decentralized governance to act as a catalyst for social capital development (IR2), and broad-based development through support of locally-championed plans and reforms (IR3).

Development Hypothesis: No development hypothesis was stated in the CA. A proxy hypothesis is articulated in the statement from the CA that the BALADI program "tested the hypothesis that many municipalities have outstanding leadership but lack the financial capital and gender balance to realize their visions and implement participatory development projects."

Objectives and Outcomes. The program's objectives included: (1) Provision of public services through local government support, (2) Social capital developed to act as catalyst for participatory decentralized governance, and (3) Broad-based development through support of locally-championed plans and reforms. Expected outcomes for these objectives are shown in Figure 2.

Program Implementation Approach: CL, leading the development, construction, and social capital activities, proposed a consortium with the Institute of Progressive Women (IPW) leading the gender component, and Terre Liban (TL) leading the environmental component. IPW initially provided inputs but withdrew from the team at its own request near the end of Year 1.

CL⁴ solicited applications from municipalities for community development projects to be implemented via CL-managed sub-awards that provided in-kind technical assistance, training, equipment, and small-scale construction. Cash grants were not provided to municipalities.

Project locations and designs were assessed based on criteria such as expected social and economic impacts, building on past assistance, offering new opportunities, and expected sustainability. The selected projects are geographically widespread to distribute USAID support across many districts. All projects

³ RFA no. SOL-268-12-000006, Section F. Expected Results

⁴ For convenience, CL is hereafter construed to refer collectively to the BALADI Caritas Lebanon and Terre Liban consortium.

were handed over to the municipalities upon completion except two that were still in this process at the end of the evaluation.

III. EVALUATION PURPOSE AND USERS

Evaluation Purpose

The BALADI/CL (hereafter B/CL) Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) requested the Performance Management and Support Program for Lebanon (PMSPL II) operated by Social Impact (SI) to conduct a final performance evaluation to answer the following Evaluation Questions (EQ):

EQ 1: To what extent is B/CL contributing to Development Objectives One and Two under USAID's CDCS for Lebanon? (A) To what extent are the activity goals, purpose and objectives/results aligned to support the USAID CDCS? (B) To what extent did the awarded municipal projects answer and/or address the needs of the supported communities?

EQ 2: To what extent has B/CL achieved the activity's goal and objectives? And what factors have contributed or hindered the achievement (or non-achievement) of the activity's objectives? (A) What are B/CL's headline outcomes and achievements? (B) To what extent has the program achieved its outcomes and stated purposes? (C) What are the main factors that influenced positively or negatively B/CL's ability to achieve these purposes? (D) To what extent were the awarded projects identified based on a participatory approach? (E) What evidence is there that public services to local communities have improved in identified communities because of the B/CL interventions? (F) How successful was B/CL program in creating long term collaboration between sub-national public entities, CSOs, and private sector to implement the awarded projects and deliver services? (G) How effective was B/CL outreach and communication, including the publicity generated for USAID and the broader Embassy by the program?

EQ 3: At what level were women involved in the supported communities where the activities were implemented? (A) Did women actively participate in the identification and the implementation of local development activities? (B) Were women encouraged to take on leadership roles in supported activities? (C) What aspects of the program demonstrate women sustainable participation beyond the life of the activity?

EQ 4: What is the likelihood that the results B/CL has achieved are sustainable beyond the life of the activity? (A) Which results show the most prospect of being sustained and why? (B) How sustainable are the permanent jobs created by the program?

EQ 5: What are the recommendations for USAID that need to be taken into consideration for future local development programming? (A) What were the critical challenges and lessons learned from this program? (B) Provide recommendations on how the design for similar activities could be enhanced to better engage CSOs, communities and the private sector to improve public service delivery at municipal level and create economic opportunities at sub-national level. (C) Offer recommendations to build on the adopted approach to increase women participation in future similar programs.

Evaluation Users

The key users of this evaluation include the USAID/Lebanon Local Development Office, Program Office, and others at the Mission's discretion. The results will inform the annual portfolio review, future program design, and IPs' current and future program implementation.

Evaluation Schedule and Team

The evaluation started on October 9, 2019. Three weeks planned for field visits for data collection were extended owing to travel restrictions caused by nationwide protests that started in October. Therefore, data collection concluded only on November 29, 2019.

A two-person evaluation team (ET) comprised of an international local governance evaluation expert as Team Leader and one Lebanese local development expert as Team Member conducted the evaluation. The team was actively supported by PSMPL II staff and SI's headquarters staff. During the evaluation SI actively engaged with USAID/Lebanon's Local Development Office, CL, and other relevant stakeholders with USAID/Lebanon's concurrence.

IV. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The ET gathered and analyzed qualitative and quantitative data from document reviews, site visits, key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs). Two FGDs were conducted with women who use the Gharb el Aala agri-business food processing center and who received training under a Fixed Award Agreement (FAA) and a mixed gender group who use the cold-storage facility at Ainata/Baalbek. The ET conducted 26 KIIs with USAID staff, IP staff, municipal leaders, participating CSOs or NGOs, and facility managers. The ET visited ten of the 23 B/CL project sites.

Some KIIs were compressed owing to delays caused by daily protests during the evaluation but this did not significantly affect the results. Recall, response, and selection biases likely affected the quality of KII and FGD responses, but the ET minimized the risks by conducting as many KIIs and FGDs as possible, triangulating responses, and masking respondents' identities to promote candor. The evaluation adhered to SI's Evaluation Quality, Use, and Impact (EQUI™) approach, processes and protocols to ensure data quality assurance and control, and to incorporate learning and utilization awareness. The methodology matrix in Annex 2 shows how data sources and collection and analysis methods were matched to the evaluation questions, with a full explanation of methodology and limitations. KII and FGD tools and questions are included in Annex 4.

V. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

EQ1: TO WHAT EXTENT IS B/CL CONTRIBUTING TO DOI: IMPROVED CAPACITY OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR IN PROVIDING TRANSPARENT, QUALITY SERVICES ACROSS LEBANON, AND DO2: INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH ENHANCED.

EQ1 FINDINGS

IA TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE ACTIVITY GOALS, PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES/RESULTS ALIGNED TO SUPPORT THE USAID CDCS?

IA.1 Alignment of Proposed Activities with USAID's Purpose, Goal, Outcomes. The original BALADI Core Request for Applications (RFA) includes goal or purpose statements, but they are not labeled as such. The Cooperative Agreement (CA) does not spell out a specific goal or purpose. However, the goal and purpose are clearly stated in the Results Framework annexed to the B/CL M&E Plan (October 2014), where they are clearly anchored to DOI and DO2.

Framing statements in CL's technical approach in the CA and M&E Plan echo USAID's goal and purpose. They mention delivery of services; long-term collaboration between municipalities, CSOs, and the private sector; governance and economic needs; and sustainable local social capital. They also speak to environmental and gender goals, leveraging of private and diaspora resources, broad-based development and strengthened governance.

USAID's RFA states that BALADI "tests the hypothesis that many municipalities have outstanding leadership but lack the financial capital to realize their visions." CL's technical approach in the CA echoes this statement, and their M&E Plan refers to the Results Framework as "the graphical representation of the Mission's development hypothesis."

CL's own Program Description in CA does not explicitly label any proposed "outcomes," but a comparison of the USAID expected outcomes (as shown in Figure 2 below) to the activities described in CL's Program Description shows a close match.

IB TO WHAT EXTENT DID THE AWARDED MUNICIPAL PROJECTS ANSWER AND/OR ADDRESS THE REAL NEEDS OF THE SUPPORTED COMMUNITIES?

IB.1 Services Were Provided or Improved (DOI). All 23 projects include aspects of service provision or improvement in categories as shown in Figure 1.

Fifteen municipal leaders cited new or improved services, though one said it is too early to see benefits. Seven of them noted that neighboring communities also benefit. Two of three IP staff said that services were improved, and one cited the Zawtar solar project as "the best example of a service improvement project." All seven IP

Figure 1: B/CL Projects by Category

Project Type	ET Visit	All Projects
Agribusiness	2	4
Cultural or Social Center	2	4
Recreational Sport	1	6
School Equipment	1	1
Solar Power	1	4
Tourism or Eco-tourism	3	4
Total	10	23

respondents cited service improvements, except one who said that a sports facility “*did not have a good impact.*”

The Chiyah sports center manager explained that 250 children had signed up for programs and that many other users drop in, rent facilities, or participate in tournaments. Kenchara’s management committee cited scouts and students as typical users of the hiking trails. However, the NGO involved in the Kahale Old Mill restoration said it was early to assess results, but that only a few vendors benefited from the project as a new venue for selling goods.

IB.2 Local Economic Opportunities Were Increased (DO2). Most municipal respondents cited job creation benefits. Six of eight identified new, mainly part-time or seasonal jobs, including jobs for women or youth. For example, the Chiyah sports center created three jobs, and school equipment provided in Roumin led to a new major that created ten jobs.⁵ Respondents in only two of the ten municipalities visited said no jobs were created, or “*not yet.*”

Municipal leaders and beneficiaries explained that projects in Gharb el Aala and Ainata will increase the profits of fruit growers and women who process agricultural products. One user cited increased income and lower costs, another cited minor economic benefits to local vendors, and FGD members in Gharb el Aala said 15 to 20 women regularly benefit. Fruit growers agreed that the cold storage facility is “*very beneficial,*” and Ainata leaders referred to the facility as “*a necessity we could not [otherwise] afford.*”

The Baaloul solar project was described as reducing costs for residents. Other projects such as Khenchara and Qab Elias (both hiking trails), and Kawkaba (eco-tourism village), were associated by municipal leaders with indirect economic benefits. For example, more tourists generate wages for workers and new money spent by workers and tourists circulates in the local economy.

Two municipalities said it was too early to assess benefits, and one (Deir Mimas) said the (as yet incomplete) project did “*not at all*” meet their needs. Women using the food processing center in Gharb el Aala said that women from other towns in the municipal union do not benefit as they cannot easily travel to Gharb el Aala.

IB.3 Contributions to Real Needs. It was beyond the resources of the evaluation to independently validate how closely the projects matched community priorities or “*real needs.*” However, leaders in seven municipalities said that their project met local needs. Although B/CL did extensive “*ground truthing*” of the grant applications, they did not conduct needs assessments, relying instead on the applicants’ own understanding of needs and priorities.

One NGO respondent (Kahale) said the new cultural center “*does not really fulfill an important need*” as local churches already serve this need. One IP respondent stated that better options could have been chosen to “*serve basic needs.*” One IP respondent said that some projects were over-ambitious or too big for the small communities. The ET examined the “*needs assessments*” described in eight grant applications (those available in English: Kfarmishki, Deir Mimas, Ramlieh, Anjar, Majdel Baana, El Khiyara, Roumin and Saida) and found the following:

⁵ These indicator values are from the B/CL Indicator Tracking Table, September 30, 2019. Jobs are defined as all types of employment opportunities created in relation to BALADI, and lasting more than one month, converted to full-time equivalents.

- one application had no needs assessment and four had minimal justification statements
- one (Saida) referred to an EU-supported local strategy, provided a strong justification, but did not say how the proposed sports stadium ranked among residents' other needs
- one (Roumin) explained how CL helped evaluate the school equipment project against a "list of priority needs" but no needs assessment context was provided
- the most competent assessment (Ramlied) cited a participatory rapid appraisal of development needs; community and NGO inputs through a public meeting and a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of alternative projects.

Other than Ramlied, none of the assessments compared local vs. national service levels, referenced service standards, compared gaps across sectors, or cited poverty alleviation goals.

EQ1 CONCLUSIONS

The projects contributed to DO1 and DO2. B/CL activities and results were generally aligned with the program's purpose and goals, and contributed to improve public sector capacity to deliver services (DO1) and enhanced economic opportunity (DO2).

Real benefits were delivered but priorities and needs were not closely scrutinized. The projects addressed real needs and provided real benefits to real users primarily in the participating communities. All 23 projects provided tangible service improvements, and many created jobs or increased economic opportunities. The overall number of beneficiaries appears to be modest because many of the 23 target communities are very small, some projects were not yet operational, and B/CL's indicator data was not very robust.

The nature of benefits varies considerably. Many projects have many beneficiaries who receive modest benefits. For example, people who enjoy sports or hiking trails, and households that pay a bit less for electricity from solar projects. Conversely, some projects convey significant benefits to a few direct beneficiaries such as users of the cold storage facility or agri-processing center.

All 23 projects serve legitimate public purposes and included elements of participation in their selection and oversight, but there was little evidence of rigorous needs assessments. In the very small B/CL municipalities this light approach is deemed reasonable. In larger communities more robust assessments might have increased impacts.

Minor contributions to build social capital and improve governance. The ET found only minor success in empowering municipalities or building their capacity to develop social capital or improve governance. These program purposes were largely overshadowed by the service delivery purpose. This is discussed in Finding 2B.3, and the EQ2 Conclusions, below.

EQ2: TO WHAT EXTENT HAS B/CL ACHIEVED THE ACTIVITY'S GOAL AND OBJECTIVES? AND WHAT FACTORS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO OR HINDERED THE ACHIEVEMENT (OR NON-ACHIEVEMENT) OF THE ACTIVITY'S OBJECTIVES?

EQ2 FINDINGS

2A WHAT ARE B/CL'S HEADLINE OUTCOMES AND ACHIEVEMENTS?

2A.1 Headline Outcomes: Services and Economic Opportunities. Municipal leaders identified the most important benefits to their communities as follows:

- The Chiyah sports facility provides a valuable service to youth, and its “*international high standards*” were appreciated for attracting well-known coaches to the facility.
- “*High-standard equipment*” provided to schools in Roumin raises the reputation of the school and attracts students from outside the community.
- The cold storage facility in Ainata reduces transport and storage costs and was highlighted for establishing a unified local sellers’ market – “*a role the co-op couldn’t fulfill before.*” The agri-processing center in Gharb el Aala similarly serves as a women’s regional outlet.
- In Baaloul the new photovoltaic solar power system reduces the cost households pay for electricity and reduces the burning of fossil fuels in private generators.
- The Kawkaba eco-tourism village is attracting paying tourists.
- Improved hiking trails in Khenchara and Qab Elias were cited for cleaning up forest areas, improving the image of the community and attracting tourists including youth.

The ET reviewed the 21 Weekly Highlights reports prepared by B/CL⁶ for success stories. Three of them (14 percent) correspond to Objective 1: two solar power projects and one that provided new school equipment. None of the Highlights explicitly cited the increased role of citizens in decision making, decentralized governance, or increased government accountability (expected outcomes of Objective 1). These aspects were also included in the mandate of BALADI CAP.

Five of the Highlights (24 percent) matched Objective 2 -- activities that engaged “market actors to improve welfare” such as events designed to promote or sell local products. None of them specifically cited increased social capital, improved local democratic practices, or citizen advocacy that influenced government decisions (expected outcomes of Objective 2).

Twenty of the Highlights (95 percent) fit the “broad-based development” rubric of Objective 3: eight projects that promoted eco-tourism or benefited the environment; ten that contributed to economic and social development, enhanced quality of life, or decreased poverty; and two that leveraged “non-donor resource flows” (expected outcomes of Objective 3).

To triangulate this finding, the ET reviewed 21 Quarterly Progress Reports and did not find evidence of reporting against expected outcomes such as improved perceptions, attitudes, welfare, accountability, and civic engagement. Only two indications of the expected outcomes were found in those progress

⁶ Twenty-eight highlights are cited from 21 reports because some reports match multiple objectives.

reports: (a) “transparency” in informing the community about the project, and (b) an “advocacy roundtable.”

The headline outcomes compiled from the Highlights and progress reports point to a primary emphasis by B/CL on improved services and economic benefits, and a secondary focus on improved governance or social capital development.

2A.2 Innovations Achieved. B/CL staff cited the solar power systems, with net metering that generates credits for power fed into the grid, as particularly innovative. Municipal and USAID respondents noted that some of the concepts are being replicated by non-B/CL communities: hiking trail improvements, the eco-tourism village, and solar power projects. This “demonstration effect” is a positive unanticipated outcome. Similarly, USAID and BALADI/RMF respondents noted that other donors have run programs modeled on BALADI Core. However, the ET did not find many creative approaches. For example, the financial leveraging from diaspora and private sources did not seem ambitious and the results were modest.

2A.3 USAID Forward Approach Built Local IP’s Capacity. One USAID respondent, and several IP staff cited the experience gained by CL as a significant outcome of the USAID Forward approach.

2B TO WHAT EXTENT HAS THE PROJECT ACHIEVED ITS OUTCOMES AND STATED PURPOSES?

2B.1 Improvements in Governance. When asked to identify the most important benefits none of the ten municipal respondents mentioned any aspect of improved governance. And when asked if government changed its work as a result of B/CL, only one municipal leader said “yes,” while six others said “no.” One said it improved confidence in municipal capacities. The ET considers that municipal-CSO collaboration is new to many of the municipalities and represents improved governance. Six of ten municipal leaders said their project contributed to their strategic plan or vision for development, which reinforces good governance practices. One leader cited BALADI CAP as providing “necessary training” - the primary purpose of BALADI CAP and BALADI Plus which contributed more directly than the BALADI Core to improve governance.

The ET notes that whereas the Project Purpose begins with “*improve the governance of municipalities,*” USAID respondents confirmed that improved services and economic opportunities were the primary purpose of the BALADI Core initiatives.

2B.2 Improvements in Public Services. As described above in findings under 1B and 2A, all ten projects visited by the ET demonstrated service improvements and seven of ten municipal leaders said they are satisfied. However, the NGO partner on one of the visited projects expressed that the project “*does not fill an important community need.*”

The ET considered two definitions of “broad-based development.” USAID interpreted it to mean the services should “*cover a range of sectors.*” Under this definition, B/CL achieved good results with projects in six sectors such as power, education, and eco-tourism (see Figure 1).

The second definition refers to inclusion. Did a broad range of community members benefit? CL's original technical approach connected broad-based development to poverty alleviation, women's participation, and civil society participation. Achievements matching this definition were difficult to evaluate, other than through B/CL's indicator data which was disaggregated by gender and youth. These data show some women and youth beneficiaries. However, the ET saw no evidence that the projects specifically targeted other marginalized or vulnerable groups.

The number of beneficiaries reported by B/CL was well below target, at 36 percent of the revised target as of September 30, 2019, and was predicted by one IP respondent to not exceed 50 percent of the target mainly owing to implementation delays. However, the ET found the indicator beneficiaries' data to be somewhat weak as follows: (1) Reporting appear to be inconsistent. Parks and recreation projects seem to count only trained staff as beneficiaries, but hiking projects counted users (hikers) and sports facilities counted anyone at a sporting event or other event such as a wedding. Additionally, (2) Counting seems to be incomplete. Rmeich basketball stadium reported all 66 of its beneficiaries in April, 2017, but none since then; while Majdel Baana sports stadium reported all 252 of its beneficiaries in mid-2017 but none since then.

2B.3 Development of Sustainable Social Capital. USAID's program design sought broad governance and social capital outcomes, referring in the RFA to, for example: citizens' perceptions of local government, participatory decentralized governance, improved accountability, civic engagement that improves local democratic processes, and effective citizen advocacy.

When asked to identify the most important benefits, municipal leaders spoke predominantly about service improvements rather than social capital effects. Four of the ten municipal leaders did mention such outcomes in answer to other questions: Kawkaba KEV "*increased confidence*" in the municipality, the agri-processing center in Gharb el Aala "*created ownership*;" and the school equipment in Roumin and hiking trails in Qab Elias were credited with "*improving the community image*." When asked if the project made the community stronger, six of eight respondents said "yes" or cited specific benefits, two said "*no change*," and one said "*not yet*."

One IP said "*definitely yes*" – that uniting people, municipal leaders and CSOs built local social capital. Another said that slow project implementation raised credibility issues, but "*when the projects became operational people's perceptions of local government improved*."

Four municipal leaders said there was community participation in developing the proposal, which likely built social capital. Two said there was no participation. Leaders in only one of the ten visited municipalities said that community groups participated in the cost share requirement, where a charitable association contributed cement. Not all projects had NGO/CSO partners, and some played un-defined roles. One USAID respondent confirmed that the extent to which community members came together differed from project to project -- some, such as solar power, had little need for collaboration or no natural role for NGOs.

2B.5 Findings on Expected Outcomes

Figure 2 lists findings and supporting evidence against the program's expected outcomes.

Figure 2: Findings Summarized by Expected Outcomes⁷

Expected Outcome	Finding	Supporting Evidence
Objective 1: Provision of public services through local government support		
1.1 Citizens perceive local government as meeting service needs and improving local welfare and thus take a role in decision making	Unknown, not measured or estimated	Perceptions were not measured by B/CL nor by the ET. There is no data from which to draw conclusions.
1.2 Municipalities show real commitment to participatory decentralized governance	Evidence of partial achievements	Citizens or NGOs were involved in all 10 reviewed projects but the significance varied and the ET could not assess “real commitment .
1.3 Accountability improved and rent-seeking opportunities reduced through greater local NGO and CBO participation	Minor achievements	No activities specifically targeted rent-seeking, but steering committees with citizens increased transparency.
1.4 Local revenue generation from public services covers O&M costs, can be re-invested in infrastructure and services	Minor achievements	Some projects generate revenues but it is too early to know if they will cover O&M costs.
Objective 2: Social capital developed to act as catalyst for participatory decentralized governance		
2.1 Webs of practical and effective cooperative relations between citizens that facilitate civic engagement improve local democratic practices	No evidence of sustainable achievements	No evidence of improved democratic practices. Temporary steering committees increased citizens’ cooperation with municipalities, but it falls short of the expected outcome.
2.2 Groups of citizens act collectively... to engage local government and market actors to improve welfare	Minor evidence of achievements	There was limited civic engagement to propose or define projects, including “market actors” (farm coops). No evidence of broad new initiatives.
2.3 Citizen advocates effectively and transparently engage local government to influence decisions	Minor evidence of achievements	Very minor evidence of advocacy in project identification; few signs of participation through transparent, formal means such as public hearings.
Objective 3: Broad-based development through support of locally-championed plans and reforms.		
3.1 Communities realize socio-economic benefits of environmental protection and manage opportunities that capitalize on the environment	Achieved in some projects	Hiking trails combine environmental action with eco-tourism. Solar projects achieve cost savings while contributing to environmental goals.
3.2 Institutions, relationships, attitudes, values that govern interaction among people, especially women/youth, contribute	Evidence of partial achievements	Agri-processing projects (four of 23 projects) contribute to economic development and may decrease poverty. Cultural centers,

⁷ Data from a 2019 USAID/SI Citizens Perception Survey (CPS) provide some inconclusive insights: (1) 50% of respondents in B/CL districts agree that municipal leaders effectively address citizens’ needs, which is notably above the rate of 39% for the whole national sample (2) 51% in B/CL districts agreed that trust in municipalities increased in the last 5 years while it was 34% in non-B/CL municipalities. Trust in national institutions (parliament, council of minister) also seem to have increased more in B/CL districts although not considerably (3) However, more respondents in B/CL districts identified “No Accountability System” as “the greatest obstacle to improved public services” (55%) as compared to 45% in non-B/CL districts. But, the ET cautions that the CPS was not designed to capture effects of B/CL; the sample size was small in B/CL districts and not representative to draw valid conclusions; there was no baseline from which to measure change; and effects of other programs operating in B/CL and non-B/CL sites likely dilute the attribution of different perceptions to B/CL.

to economic/social development, enhanced quality of life, decreased poverty		hiking and recreation facilities contribute to social development including youth.
3.3 Non-donor resource flows are identified, marketed, and managed professionally and transparently to further support locally-identified socio-economic development needs	Minor progress in leveraging and transparency	CL reported that some municipalities publicized information through public meetings or on websites. Minor leveraging of private sector and diaspora contributions was reported.

Source: See BALADI RFA 2012 for Core Objectives and Anticipated Outcomes

2C WHAT ARE THE MAIN FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED POSITIVELY OR NEGATIVELY B/CL'S ABILITY TO ACHIEVE THESE PURPOSES?

2C.1 B/CL Lacked Staff and Expertise. CL's staffing plan provided insufficient technical and management expertise in the early years of the program. The shortfall included subject areas such as architecture and engineering, construction management, monitoring and evaluation (M&E), outreach and communications, and overall project management. By Year 3 these weaknesses led USAID to ask CL to replace its first Program Director and most of the senior staff.

The initial staffing plan did not include sufficient Architecture and Engineering (A&E) resources (staff or subcontractors), and B/CL's initial response proved inadequate to deal with significant A&E issues, USAID construction requirements, and American Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance. One CL respondent said, "seven years ago it was hard for B/CL to find qualified people."

B/CL was slow to recruit or hire qualified staff in other areas such as M&E, and reporting. One IP staff said that M&E was lacking in the early years and that "some initial indicator targets were unbelievable." The withdrawal of IPW (gender) from the consortium, and the reported weakness of partner TL (environment) appear to have left gaps in expertise that were never filled. One IP respondent said that TL did not live up to expectations, and municipal leaders interviewed by the ET were not aware of TL's contributions. Outreach and communications staffing also lagged (see 2G.2 below). IP and USAID respondents noted that staff turnover was high owing in part to frustrations with bad management and mismatched expertise.

2C.2 B/CL Was Not Well Prepared to Manage a Construction Portfolio. Although construction was mentioned in passing in CL's technical proposal,⁸ they did not seem prepared for the magnitude of the work and challenges of project selection and verification, and particularly construction procurement and management, which caused delays and increased costs. B/CL identified expected challenges at places in their proposal, but none related to construction management, Quality Assurance (QA)/Quality Control (QC) or weak construction contractors.

⁸ The RFA stated that "municipal projects should improve reliable and affordable public services, expand broad citizen participation, particularly youth and women, and advance social capital. This could be through, but is not restricted to, small-scale local infrastructure, innovative economic development activities in agribusiness, rural tourism promotion, and environmental protection."

In Year 4 (2016) USAID added the owner's representative functions⁹ under Social Impact's separate PMSPL contract. Several IP and USAID respondents explained that this played a crucial role in improving QA/QC as well as safety, environmental and ADA compliance. Once established, the added focus on A&E and QA/QC held the projects to higher standards, but "*it was time consuming*" and "*caused great delays*" particularly during the project design phase.

USAID and IP respondents were almost unanimous in commenting on the weakness of CL's management, staff, and systems in the early years. Specific issues mentioned in interviews and progress reports included: lack of engineering and construction expertise and experience, poor understanding of environmental and ADA compliance, and under-estimated the documentation and approval requirements. Six of nine municipalities said that costs were under-estimated.

2C.3 Construction Firms Were Slow, Some Were Unqualified. IP respondents stated that construction firms hired during grant cycle I were not sufficiently familiar with USAID compliance requirements, did not follow them, were unqualified, or cut corners. This required additional monitoring and caused delays. It led to "*technical and electrical faults*" (Ainata cold store), which were not discovered until a failure damaged the first crop of apples requiring rework by a new contractor. In another example, the original contractor (Kahale Old Mill) damaged the site, and had to be replaced, causing "*years of delays.*" One builder (Kawkaba) subcontracted out the work to an unqualified firm causing long delays and damages and requiring demolition and rework to complete the eco-tourism village.

These flaws stemmed in part from the IP's inexperience in procuring and managing construction contracts. The contracts used by CL for the first batch of projects were too general, giving the contractors flexibility to deliver substandard work. CL's new management and qualified personnel later amended the contracts with clear specifications and corrected faulty works. The lesson was learned, and the second batch of projects were procured using clear contracts resulting in far fewer issues. Shortcomings were then caught by improved quality assurance measures.

2C.4 A&E and QA/QC Services Improved Results and Reduced Risks. CL did not initially plan for rigorous construction quality control and monitoring. They later increased the resources dedicated to monitoring the works, and USAID provided supplemental assistance as described above. CL respondents said that the integration of a QA/QC mechanism by USAID "*turned into a success by the end.*" IP staff (including SI's A&E team) cited examples of how QA/QC protected the interests of USAID and municipalities. Examples included poor jobsite safety, design and construction flaws, dangerous and shoddy construction, and poor site or environmental management -- all discovered during design, tendering or construction by the A&E team.

2C.5 Project Selection Took Longer than Planned. As shown in Figure 3, the evaluation of proposals in Cycle I took twice as long as expected. CL increased the time in Cycle 2, but then significantly missed the new target. USAID and CL respondents said the process was cumbersome and took too long. "*Round 1 took seven months... it was too complicated.*" Cycle 2 also increased the number of awards in order to commit the remaining grant funds in time. This roughly fourfold increase was said by CL to cause a bottleneck and increase the burden on already stressed program management. Nearly half

⁹ The owner's representative provides technical advice and oversight where the owner – USAID and the municipalities, in this case – lacks experience or expertise or is not present on site to monitor the work. This assures that the owner's requirements, budgets and schedules are met, and prevents or reduces risks.

of the Cycle 2 applications (20 of 49) were selected, which IP respondents said meant accepting more projects of lower quality, which further increased the technical and management workload. Missing or false documents provided by some municipalities were also cited as causing delays.

Figure 3: RMFA Cycle Times from Receipt of Applications to MOU award

RFMA Cycle	Proposal Work Plan	Approved Work Plan	Actual Time
Cycle 1: 38 applications 5 awards	8 weeks in 2013	12 weeks in 2013	25 weeks in 2013
Cycle 2: 49 applications 20 awards	12 weeks in 2014	28 weeks in 2014	51 weeks in 2014-15

Source: CL performance reports

2C.6 MOUs Used by B/CL Had Weaknesses. The MOUs executed between CL and the municipalities have the form and force of a legally binding contract, but were found by the ET to have several weaknesses as listed below:

- The MOU should reference the authorizing decision of the municipal board,¹⁰ and ideally it would be annexed to the MOU. The Cycle 2 MOUs mention the decision without attaching it, while the Cycle 1 MOUs do not mention the decisions at all.
- Roles of NGO partners were not described in the MOUs.
- Cycle 1 MOUs contained specific budgets including cost share estimates, but Cycle 2 MOUs only stated the open-ended 20 percent minimum requirement. The estimates in the first approach proved inaccurate, but the MOU did not clearly describe remedies. The second model did not give an accurate estimate and placed on the municipality the burden of potentially unlimited cost over-runs, presenting a budget risk.
- The Cycle 2 model mentions (article 3) that a detailed work plan containing scope of work and implementation schedule is to be agreed by the parties after signing the MoU. The detailed scope should be prepared before signing the MOU and included in the executed document to help clarify the parties' mutual expectations.
- In article 6 of the Cycle 2 model, the obligations of the municipality are not detailed, and no consequences are specified in case the parties' obligations are not fulfilled.

2C.7 Some Projects Were Re-Scoped. A few projects were redesigned – “re-scoped” – which caused delays. Reasons identified by IP staff and municipal leaders included changed priorities after new mayors were elected, and technical problems encountered during implementation. For example, the initial project in Baaloul called for solar power to pump irrigation water from the Litani River. Before the work started, the river water was found to be too polluted so the project was re-designed to feed solar-generated power to the grid to benefit village residents and the nearby refugee camp. This flexibility to re-scope the project led to a positive outcome.

¹⁰ The municipal decree – law 118 /1977 and its amendments requires that financial commitments made on behalf of the municipality require the consent of the municipal board.

2C.8 Expected Synergy with BALADI CAP and BALADI Plus Fell Short. The RFA and Cooperative Agreement suggest that the BALADI Core, CAP and Plus programs were expected to complement each other. But the ET saw little evidence of actual synergy, in part because BALADI Plus ended before the first BALADI Core grant projects were selected, and partly because most B/CL municipalities were too small to benefit from the BALADI CAP training.

2D TO WHAT EXTENT WERE THE AWARDED PROJECTS IDENTIFIED BASED ON A PARTICIPATORY APPROACH?

2D.1 Community Participation Was Used in Project Identification. Seven of nine municipal respondents said that a participatory approach was used to identify projects. They mentioned that communities “*expressed or proposed their needs or demands*” and helped in “*putting together the proposal and defining participants' roles.*” Farmers in Ainata confirmed that they jointly identified the cold store project with the municipality. Similarly, co-op members at the Gharb el Aala agri-business center said they helped develop the proposal/application.

However, IP respondents gave mixed assessments. One said participation was generally lacking or only “*window dressing*,” one said there was more participation during implementation than identification and design, and one said that much of the participation was generated by B/CL outreach rather than procedures of the municipal boards. The project applications seen by the ET and B/CL progress reports do not mention many formal or transparent participation methods such as committee meetings or public hearings.

2E WHAT EVIDENCE IS THERE THAT PUBLIC SERVICES TO LOCAL COMMUNITIES HAVE IMPROVED IN IDENTIFIED COMMUNITIES BECAUSE OF THE B/CL INTERVENTIONS?

2E.1 Projects Improved Services. Many examples of service improvements are provided above (e.g. Findings 1B, 2A, and 2B). The ET visited four service projects; municipal staff in three of the four expressed satisfaction, though one (solar) said the contribution, while successful, was not very significant. Leaders in three municipalities cited the benefits from “*high standards*” in the new facilities or services, suggesting that a higher service quality was achieved; one noted that their solar project reduced fuel consumption, lowered electricity costs, and benefits the environment.

USAID respondents concurred that the projects do improve services; one cited solar power as a clear example, while stating that it is too early to see improvements from some of them.

2E.2 Perceptions of Services Were Not Measured. B/CL did not develop an effective approach to measure leaders’ or residents’ perceptions of services, governance, social cohesion, or trust in government. The ET thus had no data from which to assess whether satisfaction increased in the communities.

2F HOW SUCCESSFUL WAS B/CL IN CREATING LONG TERM COLLABORATION BETWEEN SUB-NATIONAL PUBLIC ENTITIES, CSOS, AND PRIVATE SECTOR TO IMPLEMENT THE AWARDED PROJECTS AND DELIVER SERVICES?

2F.1 CSO/NGO Participation was Modest. M&E reporting through September 2019 shows only 16 local CSOs engaged – 62 percent of the target. A few projects had no NGO partners, though some (solar power, school equipment) do not seem to have a natural role for an NGO.

All ten municipal leaders named specific NGOs or types of partners but, when asked to describe their roles, only four identified ongoing relationships: assisting to organize events and awareness activities at the cultural center, co-ops in Ainata and Gharb el Aala which manage the agri-business facilities, and NGOs involved in hiking activities.

2F.2 Long-term Collaboration. In its M&E indicator 4.2, B/CL counted formation of project steering committees as "fostering long-term collaboration." The ET questions whether this collaboration will or even should be sustained beyond the completion of the sub-awards. As such, the ET considers that the "long-term collaboration" results may be overstated.

The NGO partner in the Kahale historic mill project signed an MOU with the municipality "to sustain the project," although it has not been funded yet. The agri-business projects provide other examples of long-term management collaboration, as mentioned above. USAID respondents described the long-term collaboration as rather more "alliances" between municipality and NGO than traditional Public-Private Partnership arrangements.

2G HOW EFFECTIVE WAS B/CL OUTREACH AND COMMUNICATION? HOW WAS THE PUBLICITY GENERATED FOR USAID AND THE BROADER EMBASSY BY THE PROJECT?

2G.1 Outreach Activities Focused on Grant Cycle Procedures. Outreach activities targeted at informing and mobilizing communities during the application phases were counted as successful by two IP respondents. One USAID respondent noted that outreach activities started out well but declined when CL faced implementation issues in the first grants cycle, then improved late in the program once the focus shifted to promoting the completed projects.

The ET saw very few signs of efforts to share best practices. The "Eco-Municipality Manual" launched in early 2019 is a noteworthy exception, though the ET did not evaluate its impacts.

2G.2 Quality of Progress Reporting to USAID Was Inconsistent. B/CL stopped preparing Annual Reports after Year 2, though M&E indicators reporting continued. Annual reports would have facilitated high-level analysis of overall progress toward the project purpose and goals and strengthened adaptive programming.

The quality of quarterly reports was inconsistent, and the ET found many were not of high professional quality owing to poor organization that did not adequately highlight outcomes and management issues, poor editing, and low-quality graphics. One USAID respondent said that reports started out badly but improved to "good" later in the program. It appears that B/CL did not submit deliverables such as progress reports to USAID's Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) as the ET could not find them there.

Reporting weaknesses may owe in part to staffing gaps. CL's initial staffing plan had no dedicated Outreach and Communications (O&C) post, and the first specialist was not hired until twenty months

after start-up. In September 2016 the O&C Specialist position was reported vacant, and USAID requested CL to improve the quantity, content, and quality of communication and outreach materials and tools. Improvements were noted in the quarterly report ending in March 2017, and the post appears to have been filled in the following quarter after about six months of vacancy.

2G.3 Branding at Project Sites Missed an Opportunity to Build Social Capital. The ET observed that signboards at the project sites gave USAID, BALADI, CL, and TL more prominence than the municipality and its partners. Signboards that gave top billing to the municipality and its community partners would likely have made a stronger contribution to messaging about social capital, community resilience and local leadership.

EQ2 CONCLUSIONS

The goal was partially achieved. Twenty-three community projects contributed toward the goal to deliver or improve services, and arrangements were made to manage the completed facilities. It is less clear how durable these recent management arrangements will be, and the ET saw little evidence of long-term collaboration that would indicate improved governance.

Headline outcomes improved services and economic opportunities. Leaders identified new or improved services as the most significant “headline outcomes,” followed by new jobs and economic opportunities. The completed projects provide services which are valued in the communities, while some also created jobs and brought other direct or indirect local economic benefits. Many projects were credited with serving additional beneficiaries outside the host community, mainly by attracting tourists or hikers, and attracting non-local students. Some were credited with improving the image of the community.

Some of the projects are recognized as innovative, such as the solar power projects and the Kawkaba eco-tourism village. The ET heard anecdotal evidence that non-participating communities plan to replicate these innovative approaches. The ET saw no evidence of innovations such as community recycling or composting services, measures to increase poor households’ access to social services or social assistance, public-private partnerships to establish, for example, industrial parks, reforestation, or subsidized household rooftop solar water heaters.

Although not specifically listed among the program’s objectives, the USAID Forward approach clearly resulted in significant capacity building of CL’s project personnel.

Outcomes for Objective 1, provision of public services, were partially achieved. Municipalities demonstrated commitment to participation by involving citizens in selecting and managing their projects, and some of the projects are generating revenues to cover O&M. However, the amount and quality of participation varied and seemed superficial on some of the reviewed projects; it was not evident that CSO participation had any effect on accountability and neither B/CL nor the ET measured perceptions, so there is no basis for determining whether improved perceptions of local government increased citizens’ engagement.

Outcomes for Objective 2, social capital developed, were less achieved. Few signs were found of outcomes that contributed to building social capital. Citizens did engage with local government to “improve welfare, and influence decisions to channel resources toward the selected projects.” However,

the ET did not see evidence of more systemic outcomes such as webs of practical and effective cooperative relations that facilitate civic engagement, or broad enhancement of citizen advocacy for increased transparency.

Outcomes for Objective 3, broad-based development, were partially achieved. Solar and eco-tourism projects benefit the natural environment and capitalize on it. Most if not all contribute to the broadly-stated outcome of strengthening relationships and attitudes that help women and youth contribute to economic and social development, enhanced quality of life, or decreased poverty. The significance of these outcomes varies widely. Finally, the projects did harness non-donor resources, mainly municipal funds from public sources, to serve local development needs; but comparatively minor resources were contributed by CSOs and almost none from private (i.e. business) sources.

A number of factors caused delays or slowed overall program implementation. The most significant delay factors were:

- The CL consortium was not well prepared to manage a complex construction program, and it took years to develop key capacities such as architecture, engineering, construction management, M&E and reporting, and overall program management.
- Construction firms were slow, and some were unqualified or tried to take shortcuts, which required increased supervision, rework and replacement of some contractors.
- The process of selecting the projects was slower than expected and the surge of projects in Cycle 2 further aggravated low capacity and weak systems.
- Cost estimates were inaccurate and municipalities found it challenging to meet their cost-share amounts or schedules.
- Some projects were re-scoped for technical reasons.

B/CL improved its staff and management. B/CL replaced unqualified or under-performing staff after the early years of the program, and revised its staffing plan to provide skills matching the nature and scale of activities as they developed and the need for increased monitoring and supervision. This factor contributed to the program's successes.

A&E services and QA/QC protocols improved program results. When the lessons of Cycle 1 and impacts of a concentrated Cycle 2 became clear, and as USAID/Lebanon also recognized an A&E gap across multiple programs, USAID and CL then developed a new approach to address the A&E shortcomings of B/CL (USAID did the same with BALADI/RMF). The A&E services added by USAID via the separate PMSPL II contract, established a set of "QA/QC protocols" that made several positive contributions:

- They filled the missing function of an "owner's representative," providing supplemental expertise to meet construction and compliance requirements
- Design and construction flaws were detected and remedied
- Jobsite safety improved and worksite environmental non-compliance was reduced
- The overall quality of construction and site works increased

Mayors were committed and resourceful. Despite a long rocky road from project selection, verification, detailed design, procurement, and construction, most mayors remained committed to the projects, demonstrating patience and resourcefulness along the way. It is noteworthy that they complied with land-legal requirements and high environmental and ADA requirements, and secured additional funding to fill budget gaps and cost over-runs.

Outreach concerning the grant project cycle was effective. Most of the outreach activities were focused on announcing the program, encouraging and informing potential applicants, widening participation beyond the municipal board, and promoting hand-over events. These activities were largely successful, as evidenced by the receipt of 83 applications and successful completion of 23 diverse grant-funded projects. There was little outreach and communications beyond the project cycle, either to share best practices and success stories with non-participating communities or to promote community-wide outcomes in participation, governance, and social capital.

The quality of reporting was inconsistent. Performance reporting was a challenge for B/CL. Problems included variable quality of reports, no annual reports prepared after Year 2, and reports were not submitted to DEC on time. The ET found inconsistencies in some M&E indicators. A more robust approach to monitoring and reporting progress would have given USAID and B/CL tools to manage adaptively through continuous learning.

EQ3: AT WHAT LEVEL WERE WOMEN INVOLVED IN THE SUPPORTED COMMUNITIES WHERE THE ACTIVITIES WERE IMPLEMENTED?

EQ3 FINDINGS

3A DID WOMEN ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN THE IDENTIFICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES?

3A.1 Women Participated in Project Identification and Design. Six of eight municipal leaders who responded to the question said that women were involved to some extent in project design or selection. Women were said not to be involved at all in identifying the two reviewed hiking projects. A gender evaluation analysis conducted in 2013-14 by IPWV showed that more than 50 percent of the Cycle 1 grant applications “do not include any gender sensitive component and that women in these projects are sidelined; therefore, gender-based inequalities in decision-making persist.” B/CL adjusted in response to this finding before Cycle 2 including: (a) conducted training on gender inclusion as part of Cycle 2 outreach, and (b) beefed-up gender requirements in the screening and selection procedures. These adjustments increased women’s participation by 20 to 30 percent from Cycle 1 to Cycle 2 as indicated to the ET by one B/CL respondent.

3A.2 Women Participated in Project Implementation. Leaders in seven municipalities identified roles played by women, including: head or member of steering committee, member of management committee, and facility manager. IP staff stated that women were most active in the agri-businesses and food processing projects. Their participation was reported as less significant during implementation (construction) than during identification, design, and management phases. Women were present on all steering committees but decisions were ultimately made by the 23 mayors. The major

activity during implementation was construction which is an industry heavily dominated by men in all roles.

3A.3 Gender Balance of Beneficiaries Varied Greatly by Project. Overall 55 percent of reported beneficiaries are men vs. 45 percent women (M&E Indicator 1.1). Sports facilities have the biggest gender imbalance. Women beneficiaries are reportedly below 30 percent in six of 23 projects; five of these are sports or recreation facilities, the sixth is the cold storage facility for apple growers. The highest share of women beneficiaries is 68 percent in the Anjar food processing center for women. When analyzed by category of project, most categories show a roughly equal balance between men and women users, except recreation/sport facilities which suggests there is low female participation in sports, perhaps owing to cultural norms.

3B WERE WOMEN ENCOURAGED TO TAKE ON LEADERSHIP ROLES IN SUPPORTED ACTIVITIES?

3B.1 Women Filled Leadership Roles. Seven of eight municipal leaders who responded to this question identified leadership roles played by women, during identification and design, and serving on steering or management committees. As noted above, although women participated on steering committees, decisions were made by men. Three IP respondents cited examples of women in leadership roles operating the completed facilities, the most significant being women's co-ops managing agri-processing facilities.

3C WHAT ASPECTS OF THE PROGRAM DEMONSTRATE WOMEN'S SUSTAINABLE PARTICIPATION BEYOND THE LIFE OF THE ACTIVITY?

3C.1 Women Are Involved in Many Management Roles. Several of the completed projects reviewed by the ET are now managed by women, notably: female heads of management committees (Chiyah, Kawkaba) and one co-op (Gharb el Aala); one event coordinator (Kahale); and one financial manager and accountant (Ainata).

EQ3 CONCLUSIONS

Women filled many roles at different levels. Women's involvement varied considerably by project type and across the phases of project identification, design, implementation and operation or management. During implementation (construction) women participated on steering committees but men (mayors) made the main decisions and performed the construction work. Positive examples of women's involvement in project design and as facility managers shows that they can engage in non-traditional ways. The most likely sustained benefits to women are income generated from agri-processing and jobs gained by women hired to manage facilities (e.g. eco-village, agri-processing).

The share of women beneficiaries varies greatly. The share of women benefiting from completed projects seems to reflect traditional or cultural norms, with low participation in sports facilities (e.g. football and basketball players) and the cold storage facility (farmers). This owes to the fact that most sports facilities were designed from the start with young males in mind, rather than catering for both males and females by designing gender sensitive sports facilities and activities that meets the needs of females and males. The withdrawal of IPW from the consortium and the subsequent reduction in gender expertise likely reduced the capacity of B/CL to recognize and respond to such gender imbalances.

EQ4: WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE RESULTS B/CL HAS ACHIEVED ARE SUSTAINABLE BEYOND THE LIFE OF THE ACTIVITY?

EQ4 FINDINGS

4A WHICH RESULTS SHOW THE MOST PROSPECT OF BEING SUSTAINED AND WHY?

4A.1 High Usage Rates and Demand were Reported by Some Projects. Two facility managers and one municipal leader (Kawkaba tourism village, Chiyah sports center, Ainata cold storage) reported that demand from users exceeds the capacity of the facilities. Five mayors (Ainata cold store, Baaloul solar, Kawkaba tourism village, Qab Elias and Khenchara hiking trails) expressed the desire to expand the facilities in the future. All three facility managers interviewed identified multiple types of users including women, men, youth, residents, and refugees; each said the facility attracts non-local users.

4A.2 Some Projects Generate Revenues but it is Early to Evaluate Sustainability. Five of ten municipal leaders said revenues are generated but do not cover all costs; one indicated they expect to achieve cost recovery, two said it is too early to assess revenue generation, and two (hiking trail projects) said they have no intention to generate revenues. Two of the three facility managers interviewed (Chiyah, Kawkaba) said their facility is covering operating costs. The Ainata FGD indicated that the municipal budget provides O&M funding.

4A.3 Results of Business and Sustainability Plans Are Unclear. One IP respondent indicated the Sustainability Plans elevated the projects above standard practice, but one noted that B/CL had no visibility into sustainability once the completed projects were handed over. None of the three facility managers interviewed identified challenges that would affect sustainability, except the Kawkaba eco-village manager who expects high maintenance costs because “*some low-quality materials were used.*” None of nine municipal leaders identified management challenges.

4A.4 Mayors’ Interests Cited as a Key Factor in Sustainability. One IP respondent said the interest of the mayor is the most important factor in sustainability. Seven of the ten municipal leaders indicated they would like to expand or improve the projects, which suggests they may be inclined to continue providing support.

4B HOW SUSTAINABLE ARE THE PERMANENT JOBS CREATED BY THE PROJECT?

4B.1 Jobs Are Funded from Diverse Sources or Unpaid Volunteers. Municipal leaders said that staff are paid from user fees on four projects (Chiyah, Khenchara, Qab Elias, Ainata), one is paid by national government (Roumin teacher salaries), and one relies on volunteers (Kahale Old Mill). Two others said no jobs were created or “*not yet.*” Five of the ten municipalities said their project did not intend to generate income (Khenchara, Qab Elias, Kahale, Roumin, and Deir Mimas).

EQ4 CONCLUSIONS

There were positive indications pointing toward sustainability of the services and economic benefits, but it is too early to draw conclusions from evidence. 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. Notably, sports facilities and hiking trails are being used, the KEV 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 Ainata cold store, and the KEV 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 were 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 toward these outcomes.

EQ5: WHAT ARE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR USAID THAT NEED TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION FOR FUTURE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING?

5A WHAT WERE THE CRITICAL CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED FROM THIS PROGRAM?

According to CL’s original proposal, the main challenge was a *“lack of experience and knowledge on the part of municipalities as to USAID financial and compliance requirements.”* This was indeed a considerable challenge, but CL’s own inexperience was an equally significant challenge to the program’s overall pace and results.

Challenges from construction projects. Many of the critical challenges stemmed from the construction works. Twenty-one of 23 projects included elements of new construction, site works, or rehabilitation of structures. The main challenges and lessons related to construction were:

- CL and USAID did not initially anticipate the scale of management and compliance challenges. B/CL was ill-prepared to provide A&E services, and neither party fully appreciated the need for an owner’s representative to assure construction quality and compliance. The staffing plan and staff expertise were adjusted over time, and USAID engaged a separate contractor to provide useful A&E and construction QA/QC services.
- Without a robust A&E team it was difficult for B/CL to evaluate and select well-qualified construction contractors and oversee their work. Many bids had to be evaluated, and many of the bidders proved unqualified, which introduced delays. Quality and schedules suffered when ill-qualified contractors were selected, and some ultimately replaced.
- Many of the contractors were unfamiliar with USAID’s standards and compliance framework, worked slowly, introduced construction flaws or damaged the site, and did not comply with safety and site management requirements.
- Many cost estimates and construction schedules were not accurate, resulting in cost over-runs that landed mainly on the municipal (cost-share) budgets and delays that significantly extended completion dates, complicated the municipal funding task, and at times required work to be redone owing to delays.

The original RFA and CA did not seem to anticipate that the program would become so intensely focused on construction, which was mentioned only in passing, and no construction related challenges were foreseen by CL. Nevertheless, over 90 percent of the projects (21 of 23) and 98 percent of sub-award funding went toward construction projects. Several factors led to this focus:

- Many municipalities, particularly the smaller ones, would use land to meet their 20 percent cost share requirement – it would require no cash and would be much easier than contributing scarce cash from the budget or Independent Municipal Fund.
- With land as the main cost-share element, the projects naturally inclined toward construction of physical infrastructure or facilities.
- Elected leaders are naturally drawn to projects which offer construction contracts to be awarded, equipment to be procured, and ribbon-cutting ceremonies.

Selection procedures were slower than expected. Procedures for selecting projects were time consuming for all parties. One-size-fits-all scoring criteria were not suitable for all the proposed projects. The number of projects selected quadrupled from five in Cycle 1 (CL and HF projects) to 20 in Cycle 2. This large increase strained personnel and management systems and likely delayed some projects. Better preparation by CL, and/or fewer projects per cycle would have reduced this challenging bottleneck.

Mayoral transitions caused delays. Several projects faced delays when newly-elected mayors questioned the projects they “inherited” or showed less interest in implementing them. One project was re-scoped to satisfy the new mayor. To some extent this may be inevitable, but it demonstrates the benefit of developing strong champions for the project within and outside the municipal board and of including language about continuity of the project in the MOU.

5B PROVIDE RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW THE DESIGN FOR SIMILAR ACTIVITIES COULD BE ENHANCED TO BETTER ENGAGE CSOs, COMMUNITIES AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY AT MUNICIPAL LEVEL AND CREATE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AT SUB-NATIONAL LEVEL

Refine and clarify expectations in the RFA and CA to improve the quality of offers. B/CL quickly became dominated by the unexpected challenges of implementing construction projects. This overwhelmed the unprepared B/CL team because its original staffing plan, proposed staff, and systems and procedures did not fit the emerging technical and management needs. If an RFA could better anticipate the nature of the program’s activities, then winning IPs would be better prepared to start fast on a sure footing.

Use a longer start-up to strengthen the prime IP, especially for national execution of large or complex programs. The RFA expected the awardee to launch the first grant cycle within 75 days after award. CL’s proposed work plan echoed this ambitious target but did not achieve it. The start-up plan was too short, and CL needed more time and resources to establish a competent team. In retrospect, a more successful start-up would likely have paid dividends for the remainder of the program. A longer start-up could include, for example:

- More time to hire better-qualified staff and train staff to fill skills gaps.
- Setting up robust management, monitoring and reporting systems, databases and scheduling tools to help manage workflow and decision-making.
- More time to conduct pre-award surveys of consortium members.
- Workshops for USAID and IP to refine the work plan, indicators, and reporting templates.

- Pre-qualifying subcontractors such as training providers and construction companies.

For a large program implemented by a national prime, USAID should encourage and enable the IP to field seasoned short-term experts at start-up to help orient and train staff as well as establish protocols, systems, templates, databases, and other management and administrative systems.

Introduce and explain the function of “owner’s representative” in the solicitation. The role of the owner’s representative is to apply A&E and construction management expertise to assure that the owner’s requirements are met. This is done by monitoring conformity to the design/plan, quality of materials and construction, and compliance with standards. Typically, an owner’s representative is needed when the owner - USAID and the municipalities, in this case - do not have in-house expertise or are not present to perform regular oversight. On B/CL, construction projects began before this function was understood or in place. On future programs that include construction USAID should anticipate this need, describe the role in the RFA or RFP, and either explain how it will be implemented, or ask offerors to describe an approach of their own (some USAID primes have this expertise in-house). The aim is to make sure that the function is in place as soon as A&E designs are prepared, and before construction starts.

Strengthen the MOU model. CL used an MOU to define and control the municipal sub-grants. The MOUs were legally binding agreements, but had some weaknesses, as discussed under 2C.6 above. The following recommendations are made to improve the MOU model.

- Language should be more clear, consistent, detailed and stronger to better define the roles and responsibilities of the parties and shape their expectations.
- Estimates of costs, cost-sharing, and schedules should be as detailed and accurate as reasonably possible to help the parties to plan and fulfill their requirements.
- Roles and responsibilities of third parties should be described. For example, contributions by NGOs, or the services of a third-party “owner’s representative.”
- On B/CL the risk of cost over-runs fell mainly on the municipalities, and it was difficult for them to honor the MOU when significant over-runs occurred. If possible, risks should be shared equally by the parties, or in proportion to their contributions.
- Municipalities felt that USAID and B/CL made unilateral decisions that drove up their costs or added unnecessary delays. USAID and IPs should always strive to interact with the municipality as an equal partner.
- The decision of the municipal board specifically authorizing the mayor to enter into the agreement (MOU) should be cited in the body and annexed to the MOU.

Improve the design of the sub-award program. It may be fruitful to pre-test the sub-grant rules and eligibility requirements, and the selection criteria and process. This could be done through a workshop with selected staff and municipal leaders, to reveal weaknesses and fine tune the requirements. Recommendations to reshape the selection process include:

- Provide more information and assistance to municipal staff and CSOs prior to opening the application window. Use workshops to illustrate creative approaches to achieve inclusion, leverage private-sector resources, and engage CSOs.

- Conduct a rapid needs assessment jointly with municipal board members or staff to review priorities and identify projects that serve more and more diverse beneficiaries
- Expand the allowable types of projects to include, for example, solid waste, drainage, and environmental remediation.
- Consider a lower grant size ceiling to reduce the amount of the municipal cost-share, to reduce the bias toward big construction projects based on land to meet the cost-share requirement. Smaller projects may also reduce risks, get results faster, and allow flexibility to adjust to changing needs, priorities and emergencies.

Simplify the grant application and evaluation process. The application and award process was lengthy. A two-stage process should be considered with an initial screening based on a simpler concept note. The evaluation committee would quickly make preliminary selections based on the concept notes, then use a negotiation memo to guide fewer, detailed second stage applications.

Hand over operational projects at least six months before the end of the program to allow operational support and monitoring. Earlier handover would allow a period of assistance to ease the transition to the operation of the facilities. Emphasis would be placed on setting up management systems and O&M budgets based on real cost and revenue data.

Compare top line results between B/CL and BALADI/RMF to identify additional lessons learned. USAID does not often have opportunities to compare two projects as similar as B/CL and BALADI/RMF. When designing the final evaluation of BALADI/RMF, USAID should consider including an Evaluation Question to: (1) briefly compare and contrast the extent to which the objectives and outcomes of the two programs were achieved, and (2) identify and draw conclusions about internal or external factors that caused significant differences in top line results.

5C OFFER RECOMMENDATIONS TO BUILD ON THE ADOPTED APPROACH TO INCREASE WOMEN PARTICIPATION IN FUTURE SIMILAR PROJECTS.

Provide more gender-specific training. Prime implementers should provide more gender training to their staff, partners and beneficiaries to highlight gender gaps and sensitize them to gender issues to increase impacts and sustainability.

Enforce compliance with the mandatory Gender Equality and Female Empowerment (GE/FE) policy. IPs should be required to make sure gender is appropriately integrated in the project from start to finish. Sub-award project budgets should be required to allocate funds for this purpose, for example to promote the service/facility amongst women, to train women to use or benefit from the service, and to provide training for women to staff or manage the facility.

Consider a separate grant channel for projects addressing women’s needs. NGOs could be provided separate or complementary grants to advocate for women’s needs, encourage their civic engagement, and provide services to women.

VI. ANNEXES

ANNEX I: STATEMENT OF WORK

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

FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION - SCOPE OF WORK

October 2019

INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) awarded two cooperative agreements to Rene Moawad Foundation (RMF)—CA No.AID-268-A-12-00004—and Caritas Lebanon (CL)—CA No.AID-268-A-12-00005—to implement the Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development and Investment (BALADI) project. The BALADI Cooperative Agreement (CA) had an aggregate value of \$27 million over a period of 5 years; from September 30, 2012 to September 29, 2017. The CL BALADI activity was later extended until November 2019.

CL has a total budget of \$12,928,203 and is implementing the BALADI project in 14 Lebanese districts: Aley, Metn, Baabda, Hermel, Baalbeck, Rachaya, West Bekaa, Zahle, Hasbaya, Nabatieh, Tyre, Bint Jbeil, Marjeyoun, and Saida.

As BALADI/CL reaches its end of term on November 30, 2019, BALADI/CL Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) requested a final performance evaluation to assess BALADI/CL activities for their relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The evaluation is designed to provide the mission with input on the project's approach and activities in terms of achieving outputs, outcomes and stated objectives. The evaluation will analyze the extent of achievement of the BALADI/ CL's objectives, evaluating its outcomes, documenting successes, challenges, and lessons learned for future programs as well as analyzing its sustainability for future programming. Moreover, it will analyze the project's impact on empowering municipalities to implement needed local development activities that improve the social and economic conditions in communities, with special focus on host community needs. This evaluation will also address the gender aspect as a crosscutting element of all activities, showing to what extent BALADI/CL has adhered to the USAID's gender integration requirements.

In the spirit of Collaboration, Learning and Adaptation (CLA) the evaluation will also provide recommendations for programming for future USAID/Lebanon project design. Project stakeholders are included in the review process, and will be asked to participate in making recommendations and reviewing findings of this evaluation.

The evaluation will be conducted with adherence to SI's Evaluation Quality Use and Impact (EQUI™) approach, processes and protocols. EQUI processes are designed to achieve a quality evaluation that incorporates learning and utilization. Based on EQUI, this evaluation will have a utilization focus. In addition to assessing program performance in achieving planned objectives, the evaluation will highlight lessons learned and provide recommendations taking into consideration programming of future activities in Lebanon. To support utilization, this evaluation will include a post-evaluation action plan. Aligned with this mission, SI will continue to actively engage USAID, implementing partners (IPs), and other stakeholders in the evaluation process.

The estimated duration for completion of the evaluation is 10 weeks with a proposed start date in October 2019. A six-day work week is authorized for the evaluation team. The proposed evaluation team will include an Expat Evaluation Team Leader, local and/or international specialized experts. The team will be assembled to have the needed expertise in local governance, community development and public administration. It is estimated PMSPL II team will contribute around 45 days LOE. Illustrative LOE for the Team Leader is 45 days; Local Experts and additional Expat Experts' LOE is to be determined. The deadline for completion of the evaluation is December 2019.

AUDIENCE AND INTENDED USERS

Throughout the BALADI/CL evaluation, SI will actively engage USAID/Lebanon, specifically the Local Development Office, the implementing partner and others relevant stakeholders at the discretion of the Mission. SI worked with USAID to clarify the purpose, users, and decision-making uses of the evaluation which ultimately led to an agreed focus on five main specific evaluation questions. The EQUI approach will continue to guide discussions on methodological choices and presentation of results, which will help assure that the findings and report will meet USAID and other stakeholders' needs. In the spirit of the USAID Evaluation Policy, the evaluation will provide USAID/Lebanon with concise, actionable recommendations based on findings and analysis to be used by USAID for future program design or program improvement. The team anticipates that the results from the evaluation will be used by USAID/Lebanon during its annual Portfolio Review. The final evaluation report will become publicly available on the Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC).

ACTIVITY IDENTIFICATION

The USAID awarded two cooperative agreements to RMF and CL to implement the Building Alliance for Local Advancement, Development and Investment (BALADI) project. CL has a total budget of \$12,928,203.01 and is implementing the BALADI project in 14 Lebanese districts: Aley, Metn, Baabda, Hermel, Baalbeck, Rachaya, West Bekaa, Zahle, Hasbaya, Nabatieh, Tyre, Bint Jbeil, Marjeyoun and Saïda. The BALADI/CL Cooperative Agreement (CA) extends over a period of 5 years; from September 30, 2012 to September 29, 2017. It was later extended until November 2019.

The main BALADI project is referred to as BALADI Core to distinguish it from other BALADI-affiliated projects. It aims at assisting municipalities in overcoming the financial and human resource constraints that get in the way of implementing community development projects. The first competitive request for municipal project applications was implemented in 2013 and the second one in January 2015. BALADI Core is now in its fifth year of implementation. To date, BALADI/CL has provided grants to a total of 75 municipalities in partnership with lead non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to implement grant-based service delivery activities.

The BALADI Core program will achieve demonstrated long-term collaboration between municipalities or unions of municipalities, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and private-sector entities to implement and manage community projects and deliver services in a gender-balanced manner. Results shall be achieved throughout the life of the program. BALADI's anticipated outcomes are: 1. The provision of public services through local government support. 2. The development of social capital as a catalyst for participatory decentralized gender-balanced governance. 3. The establishment of broad-based development through support of locally-championed plans and reforms.

INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

The BALADI project was designed to support achievement of CDCS (2014-2019) DO1, through achievement of IR 1.3, and CDCS DO2 through achievement of IR 2.1. In particular, the project was designed to encourage service delivery by local governments by supporting municipalities and municipal unions nationwide to address citizen governance and economic needs.

Caritas Lebanon's sub-awardee Terre Liban (TL) will focus on the Environmental component of the project as to compliances and development of environmental criteria in addition to their experience with recycling and waste recycling projects. BALADI implementers solicit applications from municipalities and unions of municipalities for village-community development projects. The selected development projects are directly implemented by the BALADI implementer or with the help of its consortium and therefore, Municipalities and Unions of Municipalities only receive in-kind support to implement their proposed projects. In-kind support is in form of technical assistance, training, equipment, and small-scale construction. Implementing consortia does not provide cash grants to municipalities or unions of municipalities.

Selection of municipal project locations and activities is made based on expected social and economic impact, on areas benefiting from past USAID (or other donor) programming or where new viable partnership opportunities exist, and on the operational sustainability of the project. BALADI program selected municipal projects are geographically widespread to provide good distribution of USAID support across many districts.

Operation and sustainability of each assisted project is the responsibility of the community and/or the municipality. All project activities and investments have locally owned and managed sustainability plans.

DEVELOPMENT HYPOTHESIS

The current structure and function of the central government in Lebanon inhibits complete decentralized decision-making, service provision, and economic development activities. As a result, scarce resources do not address the service needs of communities, resulting in sub-standard public goods. Moreover, pluralistic participation in local decision-making processes is not encouraged, thus limiting the effectiveness of the public services offered by local governments. Municipalities are generally eager to meet the service delivery needs of their constituents, but face a host of challenges, including lack of funds, personnel and capacities. Additional challenges currently face municipalities due to the large influx of refugees since 2011 placing heavy burdens on "host communities" with respect to service delivery and supporting local economic development. Municipalities face serious resource strain in supporting service delivery and are in need of better and more effective coordination and support from civil society organizations. Additionally, the slow growth of the Lebanon economy has impacted significantly the local economic growth and opportunities which is exacerbated by the Syrian crises and refugee influx placing further stress on local municipalities. Furthermore, the fact that municipalities all over Lebanon are dominated by men impedes access of women to decision making at their local municipalities level, and their active participation in the development of their own communities.

BALADI/CL activity offers an opportunity for proactive, innovative, well-led municipalities, unions of municipalities, and village clusters to address critical resource constraints for service delivery. Through BALADI/CL activity, USAID seeks to encourage innovation in service delivery by local governments by

sponsoring a grants program managed by local NGOs to fund proposals by municipalities and unions of municipalities that respond to the governance and economic opportunity needs of citizens. This program tests the hypothesis that many municipalities have outstanding leadership but lack the financial capital and gender balance to realize their visions and implement participatory development projects.

ACTIVITY INTENDED RESULTS

Project Goal: Long-term collaboration between municipalities or unions, NGOs, CBOs, and private sector entities to implement and manage community projects and deliver services.

Project purpose: 1. Improve the governance of municipalities and improve public service delivery.
2. Establish sustainable local social capital

Activity IRI: More capable municipalities working inclusively with citizens to effectively accomplish local development objectives

Activity IR 2: Enhanced Participatory Decentralized Governance to Act as Catalyst for Social Capital Development

Activity IR 3: Broad-Based Development through Support of Locally-Championed Plans and Reforms.

CRITICAL ASSUMPTIONS

Below are the critical assumptions listed in the activity's MEL Plan:

1. USG will continue to partner with the local governments to support the improvement of its local governance capacity and the empowerment of the municipalities and union of municipalities. The existing policies governing engagement with some parties and officials will not be made more restrictive.
2. There is a persistent risk of violence. If conflict flares up, then activities in the affected areas would be temporarily suspended and possibly modified to respond to changing needs. A critical assumption is that Lebanon will remain stable enough to permit access to rural communities in all areas of the country where project implementation is ongoing.
3. Another critical assumption is that the funded projects (activities) proposed by the municipalities will be designed to respond at the same time to citizens needs and to CDCS objectives, and while BALADI Project is to report against a defined set of indicators, not all the selected activities may be related to these same indicators.
4. The activities proposed by the municipalities will be well maintained to ensure sustainability. It is critical that BALADI team deploys enough efforts to support the implementation and operation of the funded projects.
5. The outreach activity will be extended to encourage a large number of local populations/ municipalities/diasporas to participate and to become aware of the scope and benefits of the project.
6. Personal interests of the participants in USG-supported activities may compromise the achievement of the project goals and objectives and will make development goals difficult to achieve and sustain. The selection process should ensure equitable screening and selection of projects focusing on transparency of the beneficiaries. Continuing donor and BALADI team supervision and coordination is critical for ensuring that economic growth objectives are achieved.

EXISTING INFORMATION

Contract and contract modifications; Work plans; MEL Plan; Periodic reports; Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) USAID/Lebanon; BALADI Program Assessment 2014; Local Governance Assessment 2015; BALADI CAP Performance Evaluation

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Meetings with the Mission and the stakeholders will be held prior to the Evaluation kick-off in order to determine priorities, and to add clarity to the evaluation questions based on the Mission stakeholders intended use of the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations. In accordance with ADS 201.3.5.12, the evaluation questions that were communicated as part of the SOO were organized according to the following areas.

RELEVANCE

- 1) **Main Question:** To what extent BALADI/CL is contributing to Development Objectives One and Two under USAID's CDCS for Lebanon?
 - a) To what extent are the activity goals, purpose and objectives/results aligned to support the USAID CDCS?
 - b) To what extent did the awarded municipal projects answer and/or address the real needs of the supported communities?

EFFECTIVENESS

- 2) **Main Question:** To what extent has BALADI/CL achieved the activity's goal and objectives? And are factors have contributed or hindered the achievement (or non-achievement) of the activity's objectives?
 - a) What are BALADI/ CL's headline outcomes and achievements?
 - b) To what extent has the project achieved its outcomes and stated purposes?
 - c) What are the main factors that influenced positively or negatively BALADI/CL's ability to achieve these purposes?
 - d) To what extent were the awarded projects identified based on a participatory approach?
 - e) What evidence is there that public services to local communities have improved in identified communities because of the BALADI/CL interventions?
 - f) How successful was BALADI/CL project in creating long term collaboration between sub-national public entities, CSOs, and private sector to implement the awarded projects and deliver services?
 - g) How effective was BALADI/CL outreach and communication? How was the publicity generated for USAID and the broader Embassy by the project?

GENDER

- 3) **Main Question:** At what level were women involved in the supported communities where the activities were implemented?
 - a) Did women actively participate in the identification and the implementation of local development activities?
 - b) Were women encouraged to take on leadership roles in supported activities?
 - c) What aspects of the program demonstrate women sustainable participation beyond the life of the activity?

SUSTAINABILITY

- 4) **Main Question:** What is the likelihood that the results BALADI/CL has achieved are sustainable beyond the life of the activity?
 - a) Which results show the most prospect of being sustained and why?
 - b) How sustainable are the permanent jobs created by the project?

RECOMMENDATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

- 5) **Main Question:** What are the recommendations for USAID that need to be taken into consideration for future local development programming?
 - a) What were the critical challenges and lessons learned from this program?
 - b) Provide recommendations on how the design for similar activities could be enhanced to engage better with CSOs, communities and the private sector to improve public service delivery at municipal level and create economic opportunities at sub-national level.

- c) Offer recommendations to build on the adopted approach to increase women participation in future similar projects.

EVALUATION DESIGN AND METHOD

The evaluation team will use a primarily qualitative approach to answer the evaluation questions, conducting interviews with key stakeholders and focus group discussions with BALADI/CL activity staff, USAID/Lebanon staff, partners and direct activity beneficiaries. This will be supplemented with quantitative data available from activity monitoring data, but no primary quantitative data will be collected. The evaluation questions are mapped against data sources, collection methods and analysis methods are mapped at the end of this section in Table I.

This evaluation will rely on the review of activity documentation (e.g. RFA, work plan, quarterly reports, annual report, technical reports, project website and online reforestation mapping tools, etc.), and data collected from interviews with the activity donors, activity staff, activity beneficiaries (e.g. at municipal level, community level, civil society, etc.) and other stakeholders and others drawn from BALADI/CL list of partners.

FGD, site visits, direct observations, and other mixed methods outlined in the evaluation matrix below will be employed to inform the evaluation. These approaches should allow the evaluation team adequate information to assess activity implementation and results against its objectives, scope of work, deliverables, work plan, etc. and to determine whether activity tasks were accomplished, how well activities were implemented and to what extent they meet with targets set in activity documentation. Data collected during this evaluation should also provide information on whether the target audience was reached, and how external and internal factors affected activity implementation and results.

FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION DELIVERABLES

Scope of Work: PMSPL II team will prepare the SOW including methodologies, tools, and evaluation work plan and time schedule. The SOW will be submitted to the AOR at USAID/Lebanon for approval.

Evaluation Methodology: PMSPL II team will conduct a systematic literature search, and assembling key documents. PMSPL II will also prepare a draft methodology plan including, beneficiary matrix, primary research questions, interview protocols, focus group questions and a list of proposed individuals to be interviewed. The methodology plan, interview schedules, and interview protocol will be presented to USAID staff prior the start of the evaluation.

Inception Report: PMSPL II will meet with USAID staff and team for a briefing meeting at the start of the mission. The initial briefing will focus on presenting the evaluation team plan for conducting the evaluation. Discussions with the Mission on the proposed methodologies for the evaluation will result in an Inception Report (a deliverable) that includes methodology, tools, data collection plan, report outline, etc. The Inception report will be submitted for approval by the AOR at USAID Lebanon prior to commencing the field work.

Interim Finding Presentation: Toward the end of the field work, prior to the development of the Draft Report, the team will carry out an interim findings presentation at USAID. As per USAID

direction, the interim presentation will be open to a wide number of stakeholders involved in the activity.

Draft Final Report: A draft report of the findings and recommendations will be submitted to USAID AOR clearly describing findings, conclusions, and recommendations, within two weeks of completing the data collection. USAID will provide comments on the draft report within one week of submission. The evaluation team will consider USAID comments and revise the draft report accordingly and as appropriate for an independent evaluation. Where differences of opinion exist these will be presented in a Statement of Differences Annex.

Final Report: The final evaluation report will be provided to USAID in MS Word and Adobe PDF within 15 calendar days following receipt of final comments from USAID. The report will include all of the components outlined in the “Structure of the Evaluation Report”, but not necessarily in the order specified below. The report will not exceed 25 pages (excluding appendices). Appendices should at a minimum include the scope of work for the evaluation; a list of individuals interviewed; a complete description of the methodology used for the evaluation; and any survey or questionnaires used. The report will be submitted in English, electronically in MS Word format and compliant with USAID Graphic Standards.

Dissemination Plan: The approved final evaluation report will be shared with USAID/Lebanon staff members. The approved Evaluation will be uploaded to the DEC for public access and distributed to Caritas Lebanon and other stakeholders at the discretion of USAID/Lebanon. The report will follow USAID branding requirements.

TEAM COMPOSITION

The evaluation team will consist of a team leader expert in local development, local governance, social science or other related field, and a local expert in Lebanese public administration, local governance, social science, or other related areas, a local performance evaluation specialist and technical support from PMSPL II evaluation team. USAID’s ADS requires that at least one member of every evaluation team be an evaluation specialist.¹¹ The PMSPL II team will provide evaluation specialization support to the evaluation team backstopped by Social Impact’s home office. PMSPL II proposes to recruit technical experts to collaborate in this evaluation as described above.

The Team will combine experts in the field on local development, local governance and public administration. Expression of Interest were released for International and local experts in the previously mentioned fields. Based on the qualification of the applications received, PMSPL will decide on the best team combination of expertise in the needed fields. The field of expertise for the Expat Team Leader and Local Expert will be defined as we receive the applications on the Expression of Interests. PMSPL II staff works alongside the technical expert/evaluator and forms a part of the evaluation team. SI HO has budgetary provision for additional technical evaluation support that might be needed. PMSPL II resident staff and HO staff participates in drafting, reviewing and editing the draft final report before circulating to

¹¹ An evaluation specialist is a person with significant experience designing evaluations and a strong understanding of data collection and analysis methodologies.

the stakeholders for comment and review. Preparation of the evaluation report is the responsibility of the team leader/technical expert. Final editorial responsibility and quality control for the report is with Social Impact. Comments received are to be addressed by the team leader and the technical experts supported by the PMSPL II staff.

The draft evaluation report is to be reviewed by USAID/Lebanon and, at the request of USAID/Lebanon, a broad range of stakeholders. Comments received after the budgeted end date for this evaluation, may be addressed in a Statement of Differences Annex at the discretion of USAID/Lebanon.

PMSPL II will certify that there is no conflict of interest or potential conflict of interest with respect to the performance of this evaluation on the part of the contractor and the contractor's team members. Social Impact will guarantee that substitutions will not be made for individuals proposed as team members without the approval of USAID.

EVALUATION MANAGEMENT

Pre Field-Work (PMSPL II staff): Identify and recruit the technical experts and assign a team leader. Obtain key documents, establish key contact, liaison with BALADI/CL staff to set up interviews with activity staff and prepare interview schedule with BALADI/CL stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Pre Field-Work (Expatriate & Local Experts): During this time the evaluation team will develop the preliminary design for the field work, the interview guides, the focus group discussion guides and all the necessary forms for collection of informant narratives, design of field work, and strategy for qualitative analysis takes place. The pre-field work should be accomplished prior to the data collection process.

Kick-off: The Team Leader arrives in country. PMSPL II COP meets with the Team Leader, Local Experts and PMSPL II evaluation team to assign roles and responsibilities, agree on the evaluation work plan, list of people to be interviewed, number and type of focus group discussions to be carried out, outline of the evaluation report. The team will meet with USAID Program Office and BALADI/CL AOR for an in-country briefing to agree on the details of the evaluation. Additional documentation may be requested at that time. Logistics for the field visits will also be made final.

Inception Report: The Team Leader will present an Inception report underlying a detailed methodology and data collection plan and evaluation matrix to be approved by USAID AOR prior to the start of the field work.

Field Work Interviews with key stakeholders including, USAID key staff, BALADI/CL staff, partners and sub-contractors will be carried out. The evaluation team will also interview activity stakeholders and beneficiaries, during this phase focus group discussion with activity beneficiaries will also be carried out as needed.

Post Field-Work: The Team Leader is expected to write the final evaluation report including background, setting and institutional context, data analysis, findings and recommendations. The local expert will provide support where applicable in the drafting and writing of certain sections in the report. Integration of the results and analysis from the different focus group discussions will be the responsibility of the team leader. Where applicable, PMSPL II team will provide support to the evaluation team.

Submission and presentation of the completed draft final report is the responsibility of the Team Leader; an out-brief to the Mission will be carried out prior to the team leader departure from the country.

Presentation of Interim Finding: Following the field work and prior to the submission of the Draft report, the Team Leader will conduct a presentation of interim findings to USAID staff members. The purpose of the presentation is to highlight some of the major findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the field work carried out. It will help underline any concerns or issues by USAID staff members and stakeholders to be included in the Draft as well as Final report to be presented. The presentation will take place, prior to the departure of the Team Leader.

Review Draft Report: USAID and stakeholders are requested to review the draft report and prepare comments within one-week of the submission of the final evaluation report.

Availability of Technical Expert: The expat technical expert travels from Lebanon but remains available to respond to USAID and stakeholder comments as needed.

Respond to Draft Report Comment: PMSPL II responds to comments from USAID and stakeholders revising the report as necessary.

Final Report Preparation: The final report will be submitted no later than three weeks following receipt of final comments from USAID/Lebanon. This includes time needed by SI HQ to edit and review the report prior to submission as a final evaluation report to USAID/Lebanon. The deadline for final report submission is December 2019.

Quality Assurance: SI HO and an SI PE Technical Specialist are to apply EQUI quality assurance steps throughout the evaluation and to the draft report, and final report.

ANNEX 2: EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

EVALUATION TEAM

Social Impact fielded a two-person evaluation team (ET) with a mix of evaluation, local development, local government and public administration knowledge. The team leader (TL), Mark Brown is an expert in governance and public administration who has worked as a technical advisor and program manager for USAID and other donors in the Middle-East and North Africa (MENA), Africa, South Asia, the Former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Lebanon Local Development Expert (LDE) Christina Abi Haidar is a lawyer holding a Bachelor's Degree in Law with Distinction and an MA in International Law. She has extensive knowledge of municipal and administrative law and regulations and serves as a legal expert on several projects. She has advised a range of donors in Lebanon and MENA, and has a wide expertise in developing public sector policies and public-private partnership (PPP) regulations and mechanisms.

The team was actively supported by PSMPL II staff and Social Impact's headquarters staff. Joanna Khater served as Project Manager and contributed to the data collection. Harvey Herr, PMSPL II's Chief of Party (COP); Carine Khoury, PMSPL II's Deputy COP; and Najwa Andraos, PSMPL II's Gender Specialist, provided advice and ad hoc inputs.

During the evaluation SI actively engaged with USAID/Lebanon's Local Development Office, CL, and others relevant stakeholders with the Mission's concurrence.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND TOOLS

The ET employed mixed methods consisting primarily of qualitative approaches and quantitative data available from BALADI's monitoring of activities and indicators. Document reviews, site visits and direct observations were conducted. No primary quantitative data was collected. The Evaluation Questions were mapped against data sources, collection methods and analysis methods as shown in Figure 7: Evaluation Methodology Matrix in Annex 2.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

The ET reviewed existing documents including CDCS, RFA, contract agreement, contract modification, audit reports, relevant assessments, periodic reports (annual, quarterly, other) and all other reports produced by USAID/Lebanon, PMSPL, and B/CL to determine service delivery mechanisms, quality of activity results, compliance with CDCS, fulfillment of development hypothesis, quality of program management and the likelihood of achieving activity targets. The desk review informed the design of questions for key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) and to determine the categories of stakeholders for KII and FGD. A list of documents consulted is provided in Annex 5.

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

The ET conducted 26 KIIs to obtain information about activities and outcomes to inform the evaluation. Interviewed stakeholders included: USAID staff (two interviews with two persons), implementing partners (eight interviews with nine persons), municipality leaders (ten interviews with eight mayors, one head of municipal union, four board members, and four municipal staff); participating CSOs or

NGOs (three interviews with five persons), and facility managers (three meetings with four persons). More details are found in Annex 3: Evaluation Respondents. Interviews were carried out using a semi-structured interview guide. Sets of KII questions for each stakeholder type are included in Annex 4: Data Collection Protocols.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

The ET conducted two FGDs with the following beneficiary groups: seven women who use the Gharb el Aala agri-business food processing center and who received training under a Fixed Award Agreement (FAA) issued by B/CL; and seven men and four women who use the cold-storage facility Ainata/Baalbek.

These FGDs were selected because: (a) the logistics of identifying and organizing beneficiaries were deemed realistic; and (b) these are business groups who may be able to offer insights about the economic benefits of the projects as well as information about the suitability and sustainability of the provided equipment, training and facilities.

The ET made the selection of FGD participants from among the users of those facilities identified with the assistance of the manager of each facility.

Sets of questions for each of the two focus group discussions are included at Annex 4.



Figure 4: All B/CL Sites and ET-selected Sites

SITE VISITS AND DIRECT OBSERVATIONS

The ET visited ten sites to obtain first-hand experience of activity outcomes (see Figure 4). The ET used purposive sampling to achieve a representative selection of project types (e.g. solar power, sports facilities, and agri-business facilities), to capture a range of implementation challenges and a wide geographic distribution. The categorized projects selected for ET visits are shown in Figure 6 and additional details about the projects selected for visits are shown in Figure 5.

The rationale for ET site selection are as follows, with supporting information in Figure 5:

- Projects selected in 9 of the 12 participating districts, thus providing diverse geographic representation
- One of the three projects implemented with a union of municipalities is included

- One project (Kawkaba) was selected because USAID asked the ET to look for lessons learned there in "turning around" this project from a troubled start to a very successful finish
- One project (Deir Mimas) was selected at random from the three projects that have not yet been completed and closed out
- One project (Ainata), the only Cold Storage Facility, was the first initiative to become operational, thus suggesting a good opportunity to assess sustainability factors, and to conduct an FGD with the beneficiaries who have been using the facility for more than 2 seasons
- One initiative (Roumin), is the only activity to equip a public school, and was re-scoped when the municipality could not prove ownership or possession of the land they had proposed for a cultural center
- One initiative (Baaloul) is one of several solar power projects (and also was re-scoped owing to water pollution risks)
- One of the sports facilities (Chiyah) was selected because it is implemented in an area that has Lebanese-Lebanese conflicts
- One initiative (Qab Elias) one of only two projects in which B/CL used an Fixed Award Agreement (FAA) to provide additional beneficiary training -- to evaluate how this grant was implemented and what difference it made.

Figure 5: Sampling Rationale for Site Selection

Community	District	Project Type	Selection Rationale Notes	Partner NGO
Roumin	Nabatieh	School equipment	The only school project. Re-scoped because the municipality could not show ownership of the land.	None
Deir Mimas	Marjeyoun	Cultural center	Not finalized yet owing to lack of cost share funds.	Deir Mimes United
Kawkaba	Hasbaya	Tourism - guest houses and cafe	Faced many challenges but was turned into a success.	Social and Cultural Club of Kawkaba Agricultural Coop of Kawkaba
Baaloul	West Bekaa	Solar power	Re-scoped (pollution issue) and ended successfully.	Baaloul Charity
Ainata	Baalbek	Agri-business - cold storage	Project targeted economic opportunity. FGD with beneficiaries (fruit growers).	Ainata Coop CDDG (located in Metn/Dbayeh)
Qab Elias	Zahle	Tourism - hiking trail	Partnered with Arz El Shouf (recipient of a grant)	Arz El Shouf
Kahale	Alay	Cultural center - old mill	They partnered with an NGO (Tatweer) that works on 2 initiatives (Kahale and Araya).	Tatweer
Gharb El Aala	Alay	Agri-business - food processing center	Union of municipalities. FGD with women beneficiaries.	Green Hand Sayidat Baysour Association of industrialists and

Community	District	Project Type	Selection Rationale Notes	Partner NGO
				commerce in Gharb el Aala
Chiyah	Baabda	Sports center	Sensitive area with high potential for conflicts. Youth initiative to unite people from different communities.	Himaya Skoun
Khenshara	Metn	Tourism - hiking trail	Only project in Metn District.	Scouts

KIIs were held with persons responsible for managing or maintaining facilities to gain a firsthand impression of how beneficiaries use the facility.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data source and evaluation methodology matrix (Figure 7) was used to guide how the data were collected and analyzed. The matrix ensured that multiple data sources were considered and triangulated. All the data collected from different sources were reviewed for reliability and validity.

Information from the desk review, and data gathered from the KIIs and the FGDs were coded and categorized, relationships examined between the different activity components, activities and achievements as revealed by stakeholders, and authenticated by methodological triangulation of data using parallel protocols with the same or similar questions across multiple categories of KII and FGD respondents to develop findings and draw conclusions.

Project Type	ET Visit	All Projects
Agribusiness	2	4
Cultural or Social Center	2	4
Recreational Sport	1	6
School Equipment	1	1
Solar Power	1	4
Tourism or Eco-tourism	3	4
Total	10	23

Figure 6: ET-selected vs. All B/CL Project

Data were analyzed using several methods including content, trend, gap and gender/social inclusiveness analysis methods. Content Analysis involved intensive review and coding of KII and FGD data to identify notable examples of B/CL’s successes (or lack of successes) that contributed to (or inhibited) achievement of the objectives and outcomes. Trend Analysis examined performance indicators gathered from monitoring reports and other documents to identify patterns of convergence (or divergence) of outputs and outcomes toward the objectives. Gap Analysis helped to isolate aspects that fell short of anticipated performance, and the likely contributing factors. Gender and Social Analysis was used to examine how the activities and impacts may have differed between male and female participants and beneficiaries. Microsoft Excel was used to organize and analyze evidence and findings, and to analyze quantitative data from budgets and performance indicators.

LIMITATIONS AND BIASES

The ET faced delays owing to widespread protests throughout Lebanon. Inability to travel to the project sites delayed the site visits and the Team Leader departed Lebanon for one month at the height of the

protests. Some KIIs were conducted by telephone (with IPs in Beirut), and planned meetings and site visits were rescheduled, some multiple times. The rescheduled field work was completed three weeks later than originally planned.

DATA QUALITY LIMITATIONS

The evaluation team was occasionally hampered by B/CL's poor-quality reports, missing reports and data, and inconsistent or poorly defined monitoring indicators. For example, there did not seem to be available a table or database of basic information about the sub-awards, and some of the M&E indicators were not well designed, were inconsistent and the data tables were difficult to read. While this did not change the conclusions drawn by the ET, access to more robust data would have enabled the team to draw more precise and better substantiated conclusions and recommendations.

RECALL BIAS

Beneficiaries may respond with answers that blend their experiences into a composite memory. Those who participated previously in similar activities may not separately distinguish their B/CL experience. Additionally, perceptions of events may change over time, and the ability to remember specific details may fade. The ET mitigated this risk by conducting as many KIIs and FGDs as possible within the available evaluation period to triangulate responses and increase the validity of the findings.

RESPONSE/SOCIAL DESIRABILITY BIAS

Response bias is the risk that key informants may be motivated to provide responses that would be considered socially desirable or influential in obtaining donor support. For example, a training participant may provide positive remarks because s/he would like to attend such trainings in the future. Respondents may believe that negative findings could reduce future assistance. To mitigate such bias, specific questions about desired alternative course of actions were asked. In addition, at the beginning of each KII and FGD it was clarified that the responses will not influence the possibility to obtain future assistance. Similarly, consent scripts were used to inform KII and FGD respondents that their answers are completely confidential, increasing confidence in the honesty of responses.

SELECTION BIAS

Selection bias is an inherent risk when implementers help to facilitate contact with project beneficiaries. The ET used information provided by B/CL to organize FGDs and KIIs with project beneficiaries. There is a risk that B/CL would favor the most active, responsive, or engaged beneficiaries—meaning that the ET would only hear from key informants who report positive experiences. To mitigate the risk of selection bias, the ET selected ten of 23 project sites independently from B/CL input or influence. The ET also used purposive sampling when selecting grant projects to visit to assure a representative selection of project types, as described above. It was also recognized that over the 7-year lifespan of the program there was turnover of implementing partner staff, mayors and other participants, such that recall of early events, problems and success factors is likely to be less accurate.

Figure 7: Data Source and Evaluation Methodology Matrix

Main and Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods, Sample and Tools	Data Analysis Plan
EQ1 Relevance: To what extent B/CL is contributing to Development Objectives One and Two under USAID’s CDCS for Lebanon?			
<p>1a To what extent are the activity goals, purpose and objectives/results aligned to support the USAID CDCS?</p> <p>1b To what extent did the awarded municipal projects answer and/or address the needs of the supported communities?</p>	<p>Caritas and Terre Liban staff and technical experts</p> <p>Municipal and civil society participants with knowledge of the grant projects</p> <p>Key stakeholders at USAID</p> <p>Activity Documents and M&E Plan</p> <p>Approved grant proposals</p> <p>BALADI Program Assessment 2014</p>	<p>Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with all stakeholder types: IP staff and technical experts, project participants and USAID stakeholders</p> <p>Desk review of activity documents</p>	<p>Qualitative data analysis of KIIs</p> <p>Findings from desk review</p>
EQ2 Effectiveness: Effectiveness. To what extent has B/CL achieved the activity’s goal and objectives? And [what] factors have contributed or hindered the achievement (or non-achievement) of the activity’s objectives?			
<p>2a What are B/CL’s headline outcomes and achievements?</p> <p>2b To what extent has the program achieved its outcomes and stated purposes?</p> <p>2c What are the main factors that influenced positively or negatively B/CL’s ability to achieve these purposes?</p> <p>2d To what extent were the awarded projects identified based on a participatory approach?</p> <p>2e What evidence is there that public services to local communities have improved in identified communities because of the B/CL interventions?</p> <p>2f How successful was B/CL program in creating long term collaboration between sub-national public entities, CSOs, and private sector to implement the awarded projects and deliver services?</p> <p>2g How effective was B/CL outreach and communication? How was the publicity generated for USAID and the broader Embassy by the program?</p>	<p>Caritas and Terre Liban staff and technical experts</p> <p>Key stakeholders at USAID</p> <p>Activity documents and M&E Plan</p> <p>Municipal staff (e.g. Mayor), Heads of project committees in the communities, and CSO members in communities where activities were implemented</p> <p>Community development committees</p> <p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>Persons responsible to manage or maintain facilities built or improved via the grant projects</p> <p>Activity documents</p> <p>Municipal project applications for the selected projects</p> <p>USAID stakeholders</p>	<p>KIIs with staff, technical experts and USAID stakeholders, community project participants, and facility managers</p> <p>FGD or group interview with (a) women beneficiaries; (b) other beneficiaries; (c) representatives of participating municipal associations/unions based on an interview guide or questionnaire.</p> <p>Desk review of activity documents</p> <p>Direct observation guide/Checklist for field visits</p> <p>Documents collected from the IP and/or USAID.</p> <p>Questionnaire or interview guide</p>	<p>Qualitative data analysis of the KII and group interviews.</p> <p>Quantitative analysis of reported data/indicators and comparison with the results from the field visits</p> <p>Qualitative analysis and narrative report of the results</p>

Main and Sub-Questions	Data Sources	Data Collection Methods, Sample and Tools	Data Analysis Plan
EQ3 Gender: At what level were women involved in the supported communities where the activities were implemented?			
3a Did women actively participate in the identification and the implementation of local development activities, e?	Females participating in the activity. Women in the community, Women on the project committees.	KII or FGD questions	Qualitative analysis and narrative report of the results
3b Were women encouraged to take on leadership roles in supported activities?	Representatives of women’s NGOs in the supported areas.		
3c What aspects of the program demonstrate women sustainable participation beyond the life of the activity?			
EQ4 Sustainability: What is the likelihood that the results B/CL has achieved are sustainable beyond the life of the activity?			
4a Which results show the most prospect of being sustained? Why?	Representatives of municipalities, participating NGOs and local stakeholders Activity documents. B/CL’s Staff; technical experts Key stakeholders at USAID	KII and support documents provided by key informants Have stakeholders describe the sustainability scenario then use qualitative methods to unpack common themes Sustainability Plan submitted by the municipality as part of their proposal	Qualitative data analysis of the KIIs. Quantitative analysis of indicators
4b How sustainable are the permanent jobs created by the program?			
EQ5 Recommendations: What are the recommendations for USAID that need to be taken into consideration for future local development programming?			
5a What were critical challenges and lessons learned from this program?	All supporting materials: documents, KII responses, FGD responses	As outlined above	The ET will organize and analyze findings and conclusions using qualitative methods to discern common themes and opportunities to be developed as lessons learned and recommendations.
5b Provide recommendations on how the design for similar activities could be enhanced to engage better with CSOs, communities and the private sector to improve public service delivery at municipal level and create economic opportunities at sub-national level.			
5c Offer recommendations to build on the adopted approach to increase women participation in future similar programs.			

ANNEX 3: EVALUATION RESPONDENTS

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS: GHARB EL AALA AGRI-PROCESSING CENTER

Position	FDG Respondent Name
Member of Women's Coop "Sayidat Bayssour"	7 women

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS: AINATA COLD STORAGE FACILITY

Position	FDG Respondent Name
Fruit growers who use the Ainata Cold Storage Facility	7 men and 4 women

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEW RESPONDENTS

Respondent Category	Respondent Organization	KII Respondent Name
Mayor or Other Municipal Leader	Ainata Municipality	1 man [name redacted]
	Baaloul Municipality	2 men [names redacted]
	Chiyah Municipality	2 men, 2 women [names redacted]
	Deir Mimas Municipality	1 man [name redacted]
	Kawkaba Municipality	1 man [name redacted]
	Kahale Municipality	1 man [name redacted]
	Khenchara Municipality	1 man [name redacted]
	Roumin Municipality	1 man [name redacted]
	Gharb el Aala Municipal Union	3 men [names redacted]
Qab Elias Municipality	2 men [names redacted]	
Local Project Steering Committee Member	Khenchara Municipality	1 man [name redacted]
NGO Member	Atayeb al Rif NGO, Gharb el Aala, B/CL sub-awardee (supplied training and assessments)	3 women [names redacted]
	Arz El Chouf NGO, Qab Elias	1 man [name redacted]
Facility Manger	Kawkaba for Rural Development NGO, Kawkaba	1 woman [name redacted]
	Tatweer NGO, Kahale	1 woman [name redacted]
USAID/Lebanon	Local Development Office	1 man, 1 woman [names redacted]
Implementing Partner	Caritas Lebanon	2 women, 3 men [names redacted]
	Terre Liban	1 man [name redacted]
	Rene Moawad Foundation	1 woman [name redacted]
	Social Impact, A&E Team	1 man, 1 woman [names redacted]

ANNEX 4: DATA COLLECTION PROTOCOLS

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

KII - INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

Evaluators must read this verbatim to interviewee(s) before the start of the KII and be sure that they understand it clearly before they provide verbal consents to proceeding with the interview.

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is [NAME]. I am a researcher from an organization called Social Impact, a company that is based in the United States. Our team is in Lebanon to conduct a study about B/CL. We are meeting with you and others to learn more about the support you received under the B/CL Program. We would like your honest impressions, opinions and thoughts about various issues related to this activity.

If you agree to participate, we ask you to discuss your experience and opinion of the activities and services implemented under the B/CL. The interview will take about 1 hour of your time. There is no right or wrong answer. Feel free to express what you feel.

Although we will publish our findings in a public report, all of your answers will be kept confidential to the fullest extent under local law and U.S. Government policy. I will be taking notes so that I can remember later what you tell us. But nothing you tell us will be attributed to you by name in our reporting. The report will include only summary of the answers received from all of the individuals we interview. Although we may use quotes, none of the individuals interviewed will be named in the report.

To help preserve confidentiality we also ask you not to share anything that is discussed with anyone outside of this conversation.

There is no payment or direct benefit to you for participating in this interview. There are no specific foreseeable benefits associated with participating in this interview. What you tell us will be used to improve programs in Lebanon. So we hope you can be honest with us in your responses. We do not foresee any discomfort and risks associated with participation.

Participation in this discussion is completely voluntary. You do not have to agree to be in this study. You are free to leave the interview at any time or to decline to answer any question which you do not wish to answer. If you decline to participate, it will in no way affect your access to services provided by anyone to you now and in future. You should also feel comfortable asking any questions at any time during the conversation.

Do you have any questions at this time? [Interviewer should answer any questions]

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a participant in this study, here is the contact information of people you can reach out to: [Interviewer should provide a local SI office contact phone number on a separate piece of paper].

Permission to Proceed. Do you understand the purpose of the interview as outlined above and understand that you can withdraw from the interview at any time and for any reason? And do you agree to participate voluntarily in the interview? *[Evaluator records response]*. Yes No

Initials of evaluator to indicate receipt of verbal consent: _____ Date _____

KII questions are listed below organized by type of stakeholder. In some interviews a sub-set of the questions will be used depending on the role of each interviewee in the design or implementation of the program and the grant-funded projects.

KII QUESTIONS FOR A&E/QA/QC IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

- AE01 Provide a briefing on the A&E oversight services provided by SI to the B/CL program. What prompted this initiative?
- AE02 Did both B/RMF and B/CL have the same A&E challenges? How was this element different between the 2 implementers?
- AE03 How did the SI/A&E inputs change the outcomes of the specific projects? Of the B/Core program as a whole?
- AE04 Was it clear which GOL/local government laws and regulations, and USAID policies and regulations should be followed for construction management and quality assurance? How much effort was required to interpret and apply these requirements?
- AE05 What options/approaches were considered (by IPs, USAID, SI) in developing the A&E protocols? In retrospect, would you recommend a different approach, and if so, why? Any approach that might have been faster during implementation? Less costly to implement?
- AE06 Can you give any other lessons learned from the A&E oversight element? What would you recommend to do differently on future programs like this?
- AE07 What happened in Kawkaba? What should have happened? Who was responsible for the construction QC? What was the Steering Committee's role in QC, monitoring or oversight?

KII QUESTIONS FOR FACILITY MANAGERS

- FM01 What is your role at the facility/service?
- FM02 How long has the new facility been open, or the renovations been complete?
- FM03 How long have you been in this role?
- FM04 Who is your employer in this role?
- FM05 Were you involved during the design or construction phase? In what role?
- FM06 How many people use the facility per _____ [try to get per day or week etc., as appropriate]
- FM07 Who are the main users of the facility/service?
- FM08 Can you say what percent of users are women vs. men?
- FM09 Can you say what percent of users are youth/adult?
- FM10 Do you know if there are users who are persons with disabilities?
- FM11 If YES - PWD USERS: Can you say the mix of men/women, youth/adult?
- FM12 What has changed in the community as a result of this facility?

- FM13 How does the community benefit from this facility?
- FM14 What is the most important benefit to the community from this project?
- FM15 Are any neighboring or other municipalities benefiting from the project/facility? Describe.
- FM16 Who is involved in managing it? [what organizations, e.g. municipality, NGO, business] Are community members involved in operating/managing the facility [ref: M&E Indicator 4.2]
- FM17 Are you facing any challenges in managing the project/facility at the expected level? Is it sustainable? Please explain.
- FM18 Is the project covering its costs?
- FM19 Is it generating revenues above its costs [surplus revenue]?
- FM20 If GENERATING SURPLUS REVENUE: Who is benefiting from the surplus revenue?
- FM21 Can you say how many new permanent jobs have been created in operating this facility?
- FM22 If NEW JOBS CREATED: How many men vs. women in the new permanent jobs?
- FM23 What are the best features of the project?
- FM24 What weaknesses or flaws are there in the design, construction, location or operation (etc.)?
- FM25 If you had the chance to change something what would it be?

KII QUESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

- IP01 When did you start working on B/CL?
- IP02 What is your role at B/CL? Did you occupy a different position/role earlier?
- IP03 To what extent do you think the selected initiatives contribute to the Development Objective "improving public services?"
- IP04 To what extent do you think the selected initiatives contribute to the Development Objective "enhancing inclusive economic growth?"
- IP05 How did the selection process work: time it took, challenges, selection criteria and scoring, quality of the proposals. (lessons learned plus/minus points about invitation/selection criteria/work of selection committees, ground-truthing etc.?)
- IP06 Did Caritas conduct any needs assessments to determine community "needs" or the validity of projects proposed by the municipalities?
- IP07 How do/did you measure the increase in social capital [trust, collaboration, tolerance] in the participating communities? [e.g. citizen perception surveys are mentioned in YI WP]
- IP08 Did you use feedback on social capital [e.g. from indicators, other?] to make any adjustments to your activities? Explain.
- IP09 Did B/CL projects "encourage citizen demand for responsive governance?" [from YI Work Plan] If so, how? How do you know it was achieved? If not, why not?
- IP10 Would you say that a participatory approach was used to design the communities' proposals?
- IP11 If YES - PARTICIPATORY: Can you recall/describe the community's participation? In the design? During implementation?
- IP12 What was the role of BALADI in advancing the participatory approach? And to what extent did it succeed in establishing such culture in municipal activity?
- IP13 What kinds of "innovation in service delivery by local governments" were achieved? [Intro to YI Annual Report says B/CL seeks to achieve this]. How achieved? How sustainable?

- IP14 B/CL has had several staff turnover among different levels of employees (i.e. management, engineering, M&E...); how do you think this turn over has impacted the implementation of the project? Are there any lessons learnt that we could draw from the way CL handled the turnover?
- IP15 How well did your operational plan and setup serve you: e.g. staffing levels, types of expertise on team, location of main and sub offices, regional staff members, travel to-from, etc.?
- IP16 What were the challenges that caused delays of the implementation? How did CL team address those challenges? To what extent were the mayors collaborating in addressing those challenges? [e.g. mayor changed after election?]
- IP17 Was the overall grant cycle (from invitation through closeout) too long? Clearly it was longer than expected in the CL proposal. Was the proposal realistic? Were there negative perceptions in the communities because of the long time required?
- IP18 Which challenges led to ceasing work in certain areas (Union of Bouhayra municipalities, Bchamoun and Bab Marea)?
- IP19 Can you explain the factors that caused some projects to be "re-scoped?" How did that affect your work plan and results?
- IP20 How many projects achieved the 20% cost share target? Looking back, was it a reasonable target? Did the municipalities "game the system" on cost share?
- IP21 How did the SI/A&E inputs change the outcomes of the specific projects? Of the B/Core program as a whole?
- IP22 Was it clear which GOL/local government laws and regulations, and USAID policies and regulations should be followed for construction management and quality assurance? How much effort was required to interpret and apply these requirements?
- IP23 What options/approaches were considered (by IPs, USAID, SI) in developing the A&E protocols? In retrospect, would you recommend a different approach, and if so, why? Any approach that might have been faster during implementation? Less costly to implement?
- IP24 Did B/CL make efforts to share best practices across municipalities or communities, or via Ministry or national association? Can you cite examples? Did USAID expect this? [e.g. to build social capital and municipal capacities, increase sustainability].
- IP25 Did B/CL "sustain and enhance effective, transparent, and progressive municipal governance?"
- IP26 If YES: How do you know it was achieved? If NO: Why not?
- IP27 How were the Fixed Amount Awards (FAA) used as a mechanism for implementation? To what extent were they conducive to the achievement of the project objectives?
- IP28 Was the overall budget of the Program was adequate for the achievement of the objectives?
- IP29 If BUDGET NOT ADEQUATE: What should have been different (e.g. by budget components?)
- IP30 How successful were the outreach campaigns? [in the work plan]. The YI Annual Report mentions several audiences: municipalities/municipal unions, local organizations/ associations/ cooperatives, syndicates, private sector, marginalized groups like women and youth, and Diaspora. How did you reach each of them, and for what purpose(s)?
- IP31 What were the expected and actual links between BALADI CAP and B/CL? [B/CL aimed for sustainability, but it is not clear how much capacity building CL consortium expected to do to establish sustainable practices... vs. CAP project, for example?]
- IP32 Were the sustainability plans proposed by the municipalities implemented?
- IP33 What kind of revenues would the implemented initiatives generate? Have you verified this? How is the municipality able to use them?

- IP34 Did the municipality foresee the different types of expenses to manage the initiatives? How are they able to ensure the initiatives' operation and maintenance costs?
- IP35 What jobs were created through the different initiatives? To what extent would a municipality be able to sustain those jobs?
- IP36 How much and how well did B/CL coordinate with B/RMF? What were the practical results/challenges of such coordination?
- IP37 How much, how well did B/CL coordinate with other USAID or donor projects? E.g. LWP, LIVCD, Farmer-to-Farmer, Expand Horizons, BALADI CAP, BALADI Plus. What were the practical results/challenges of such coordination?
- IP38 To what extent was the Program's M&E system useful to inform strategic decisions and guide the implementation of the program? Used to guide adjustments to activities or work plan?
- IP39 Was the Program's M&E system mainly used for accountability purposes (towards USAID) or as a project management tool? Explain how.
- IP40 Was the Program's M&E approach or specific indicators aligned with Government of Lebanon M&E or other data collection activities? Did you try to make them consistent?
- IP41 Do you think that important/useful indicators were not included? Which one(s)?
- IP42 How did you define Public-private Partnerships (PPP) for your M&E indicator and reporting?
- IP43 Did B/CL take any measures to encourage the implementation of PPPs? Are there any private sector entities managing the initiatives?
- IP44 How did the withdrawal of IPW from your consortium affect your ability to achieve your gender integration plans and objectives?
- IP45 What roles do men and women play in community development? Do they participate equally or differently?
- IP46 What roles did men and women from the community play in this specific project? (a) In the identification of the initiative? (b) In the management and decision-making processes? (c) In running the facilities? (d) In using the facilities?
- IP47 Did B/CL succeed in making "women, youth and persons with disabilities... the preferred beneficiaries of this program." [as stated in YI Work Plan]
- IP48 If YES: please cite example(s) of how "women, youth and PWD benefited"
- IP49 What elements of Caritas original design/approach for the program (from your proposal) were most and least successful? Why?
- IP50 On the basis of your general experience and with other donor projects (if any), which alternative implementation approaches could have been considered by USAID to achieve the intended BALADI Core results? Why?
- IP51 In the hypothetical case that a project like this were to come again in the future, what should be done differently? What were the main lessons learned? How to build upon them?
- IP53 For M&E STAFF: Indicator 1.1: Why are numbers of beneficiaries (27k) far below target (75k)?
- IP54 For M&E STAFF: M&E Indicator 1.2: Why are there fewer CSOs (16) than projects (23)? Did the project designs not require involvement of CSOs? Doesn't each project have a steering committee that includes at least one NGO? Why CSOs so far below the target (26)?
- IP55 For M&E STAFF: Indicator 2.2: The indicator table mentions an "end-line survey by the end of 2019." Is that being done? How?
- IP56 For M&E STAFF: Indicator 5.2: Can you explain how you defined PPP? "short- or long-term duration... when there is a clear agreement (MOU, contract, CA) to work together to achieve a common objective... a formal partnership is usually formed when the partner and the USG agree to combine

resources and expertise to achieve key development objectives and mutually determined results.” Can you give us examples of some B/CL PPPs?

KII QUESTIONS FOR MAYORS AND MUNICIPAL LEADERS

- M01 When were you elected as a mayor?
- M02 How many municipal board members are there?
- M03 How many of them are women?
- M04 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?
- M05 Were you involved in the BALADI project from the beginning?
- M06 In general, has municipal government changed as a result of the BALADI project? What are the most important change(s)?
- M07 Did B/CL have an impact on the strategic plans of the Municipality? If so, please explain.
- M08 How did the selection of the project take place?
- M09 Did you appoint a focal point to coordinate /overview/manage the execution of the project?
- M10 Are there any other partners/participants [NGOs, citizens...]?
- M11 Please describe the kinds of participants, what they did, and how much they participated.
- M12 Would you say that a participatory approach was used to design the proposal(s)?
- M13 If YES - PARTICIPATORY: Can you recall/describe the community's participation? In the design? During implementation?
- M14 Who owns the land (or facility) where the project/facility was implemented? (did you sign any contractual agreements?)
- M15 How did you arrange the municipal cost share? (did you get required legal authorizations?)
- M16 What was the most important benefit to your community resulting from this project?
- M17 Are any neighboring or other municipalities benefiting from the project/facility? Describe.
- M18 If MUNICIPAL UNION: Was the project beneficial for the union?
- M19 If MUNICIPAL UNION: How, and how much did the other municipalities in the union participate in the design and selection of the project?
- M20 If MUNICIPAL UNION: How, and how much did the other municipalities in the union participate in the implementation of the project?
- M21 Did you face any challenges during the execution of the project? Describe? If Yes: Did you find the needed support?
- M22 Who is managing the project now?
- M23 If 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?]
- M24 If MUNICIPAL MANAGEMENT: Are you facing challenges in managing the facility? Explain.
- M25 Is the project covering its costs?
- M26 Is it generating revenues above its costs [surplus revenue]?
- M27 If GENERATING SURPLUS REVENUE: Who is benefiting from the surplus revenue?
- M28 When and how did the handover take place? (if not yet, how much time does it still require?)

- M29 To what extent are women involved in the BALADI project? [Participant? Leadership role?]
- M30 If WOMEN INVOLVED: How did they participate in project design or selection?
- M31 If WOMEN INVOLVED: How did they participate in project implementation?
- M32 If WOMEN INVOLVED: How do they participate in ongoing management of the project?
- M33 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?
- M34 Is the community stronger owing to this project? How do you observe this?
- M35 Did the project meet your expected needs? (are you satisfied with the results?)
- M36 If you had the chance to change something what would it be?
- M37 What do you need or expect as additional support to evolve or sustain the project?

KII QUESTIONS FOR NGO OR CSO PARTICIPANTS

- N01 Since when was your NGO legally registered?
- N02 Where is your office located?
- N03 How many members are there in your NGO?
- N04 How many permanent staff does your NGO have?
- N05 How many of them are women? And what positions do they hold in the NGO?
- N06 Were WOMEN NGO members involved in the BALADI project? If so, how did they participate?
- N07 What is your scope of your NGO's work in general?
- N08 How did you collaborate with the municipality in the BALADI project?
- N09 Were you involved from the beginning: design, selection, execution, management, oversight?
- N10 Would you say that a participatory approach was used to design the proposal(s)?
- N11 If YES - PARTICIPATORY: Can you recall/describe the community's participation? In the design? During implementation?
- N12 What is the exact role of your NGO in the project?
- N13 Did this project enhance your NGO's expertise?
- N14 If YES - EXPERTISE ENHANCED: Please describe how it was enhanced?
- N15 What was the most important benefit to your community resulting from this project?
- N16 Does the project fill an important need of the community? Y/N/NA]
- N17 Who are the main users of the facility/service?
- N18 Do you know if the facility was targeted in any way to benefit women, youth or PWD?
- N19 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?
- N20 Who is managing the project now?
- N21 If NGO MANAGEMENT: Are you facing challenges in managing the service/facility? Explain.
- N22 Is the project covering its costs?
- N23 Is it generating revenues above its costs [surplus revenue]?
- N24 Did you face any challenges during the execution of the project? Describe?

- N25 If YES - CHALLENGES: Describe the challenge(s) and how you overcame it/them? Did you find the needed support?
- N26 Is there normally much collaboration between NGOs and the municipality here?
- N27 Did the BALADI project enhance collaboration between your NGO and the municipality (and community/village residents)? How?
- N28 Did you participate on the project Steering Committee?
- N29 If YES - STEERING COMMITTEE: What were positive or negative aspects of the Committee's work?
- N30 Who is responsible (or will be) for managing or maintaining the facility in the future?
- N31 Will the facility/service managers face any challenges in keeping it operating at a good level?
- N32 Are you satisfied with the results of this project/initiative?
- N33 How well does the project meet the community's needs?
- N34 Is the community stronger owing to this project? How do you observe this?
- N35 If you had the chance to change something what would it be?
- N36 What do you need or expect as additional support to evolve or sustain the project?

KII QUESTIONS FOR USAID STAFF

- U01 What do you consider the most significant outcomes or achievements of the project? What makes them significant? "Biggest success story -- big picture"
- U02 To what extent do you think the B/CL projects contributed to improving public services?
- U03 Generally, to what extent do you think the selected initiatives contributed to enhancing inclusive economic growth?
- U04 Building social capital was part of the program design. How would you describe or define "social capital" in communities?
- U05 Has the Development Context changed significantly since the original RFA was written (2012)?
- U06 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?
- U07 Does USAID (or IPs, or GOL) regularly assess public services and perceptions of services in communities? [EQ2.e asks about evidence of service improvements]
- U08 Was there a real development hypothesis or theory of change? The CA speaks about "outstanding municipal leadership [constrained by] a lack of resources." It seems incomplete in that it does not explicitly address social capital questions. Or is it just this simple: "if resources are provided then municipal leaders will be able to [perform better]."
- U09 Is there a definitive statement of the "project purpose" ...the CA does not identify it, but starts out: "improve the delivery of public services by local government, foster the process of democratic decentralization that facilitates greater direct participation by the citizens in governance, and encourage users in local decisions to look positively at environmental and gender equity practices."
- U10 How much effort did USAID expect B/CL to put into developing good governance (e.g. local procedures, systems, practices to strengthen municipalities) vs. BALADI Plus and CAP? Was it expected that participants would gain capacity mainly from their experience identifying and implementing one project, or through other capacity building activities? Was this a gap in the BALADI design (good governance training), or perhaps a timing problem between B/CAP, B/Plus and B/CL?
- U11 What kind of cooperation/collaboration did USAID expect between BALADI CAP and B/CL? Did you expect they would depend on each other -- e.g., B/CL aimed for sustainability, but unclear how much capacity building they expected to do in contrast to B/CAP or B/Plus projects?

- U12 How well do you think collaboration was achieved?
- U13 Are there areas where USAID itself changed the emphasis of the program, whether intentionally or otherwise (vs. the original design from the RFA)?
- U14 Any significant delays or changes introduced by the Mission? (EQ2.c seeks "factors that influenced positively or negatively B/CL's ability to achieve the goal")
- U15 Did USAID expect CL to share best practices across municipalities, or via Ministry or national association? If so, how well was it achieved... Any results from this?
- U16 The perception surveys were dropped early in the program. Was that good change?
- U17 Survey data would seem useful in measuring changes in the "social capital" (e.g. increased trust in local council or leaders, increase in people participating or interacting with local government, satisfaction with services). Was there any other effort to measure or monitor this over time (within or outside BALADI)?
- U18 Do you recall how Public-private Partnerships (PPP) were defined for M&E and reporting?
- U19 Does USAID or the Mission have a standard definition of Public-private partnerships (PPP) that corresponds to international norms? Was there a non-standard PPP definition for B/CL? [PPP seems to be defined, in the B/CL M&E Indicator 5.2 as "# of MSMEs receiving business development services from USG assisted sources" -- it seems to be an unusual definition.
- U20 What do you recall as the main themes/topics of publicity generated by B/CL?
- U21 Can you offer any insights about the success or effectiveness of B/CL outreach campaigns? (from B/CL Y I Annual Report, audiences included "municipalities/municipal unions, local organizations/ associations/ cooperatives, syndicates, private sector, marginalized groups like women and youth, and Diaspora." Do you recall initiatives for these groups?
- U22 EQ2.g asks about "publicity generated [by Caritas] for USAID and the broader Embassy." Can you give examples of this? How satisfied were you with the quality, accuracy, timeliness etc. of these publicity products or events? How were they received by the Embassy? Was there notable positive or negative feedback within USAID (or Embassy)?
- U23 Did you have much direct interaction with participating mayors, council members, CSOs (e.g. on site visits)?
- U24 If YES - INTERACTION: What kind of participants do you recall meeting [e.g. men/women, municipal or CSO, union, pvt sector]?
- U25 USAID had "substantial involvement" in the grant-making through the selection committee. From your perspective was the selection committee effective and did it operate well?
- U26 What do you recall as strong or weak features of the selection committee and its procedures?
- U27 During the implementation of awarded sub-grant projects did USAID receive any reports of corruption or other malfeasance (e.g. procurement fraud)?
- U28 If YES - CORRUPTION: Can you briefly describe what was reported? What was done about it? What should the ET know about this [e.g. as a factor affecting outcomes]?
- U29 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?
- U30 Can you identify any other noteworthy/relevant challenges?
- U31 Any other thoughts or forward-looking ideas for future program design?

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

FGD - INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT

Evaluators must read this verbatim to all respondents before the start of the FGD and be sure that they understand it clearly before they provide verbal consents to proceeding with the FGD.

Thank you for taking the time to meet with us today. My name is [NAME]. I am a researcher from an organization called Social Impact, a company that is based in the United States. Our team is in Lebanon to conduct a study about B/CL. You are invited to participate today so that we can learn more about the support you received from the B/CL Program. We are speaking with 2 or three other groups similar to this one, with between 6-10 people participating in each group discussion. We would like your honest impressions, opinions and thoughts about various issues related to this activity's implementation.

If you agree to participate, we ask you to discuss your experience and opinion of the activities and services implemented under the B/CL. The FGD will take about 1 hour of your time. There is no right or wrong answer. Feel free to express what you feel.

Although we will publish our findings in a public report, all of your answers will be kept confidential to the fullest extent under local law and U.S. Government policy. I will be taking notes so that I can remember later what you tell us. But nothing you tell us will be attributed to any individual person in our reporting. We will not be recording your name, so our notes and records won't have any information that could personally identify you. The report will include only summary of the answers received from the individuals we interview. Although we may use quotes, none of the individuals interviewed will be named in the report.

As this is a group setting, to preserve confidentiality, we ask that all focus group participants agree not to share anything that is discussed with anyone outside of this group once this conversation ends. Nonetheless, there is a risk that some discussion participants could repeat what is shared here today.

There is no payment or direct benefit to you for participating in this interview. There are no specific foreseeable benefits associated with participating in this interview. What you tell us will be used to improve programs in Lebanon. So we hope you can be honest with us in your responses. We do not foresee any discomfort and risks associated with participation.

Participation in this discussion is completely voluntary. You do not have to agree to be in this study. You are free to leave the FGD at any time or to decline to answer any question which you do not wish to answer. If you decline to participate, it will in no way affect your access to services provided by anyone to you now and in future. You should also feel comfortable asking any questions at any time during the conversation.

Do you have any questions at this time? [Interviewer should answer any questions]

If you have any concerns or questions about your rights as a participant in this study, here is the contact information of people you can reach out to: [give a local SI office contact phone number].

Permission to Proceed. Do you understand the purpose of the discussion as outlined above and understand that you can withdraw from the discussion at any time and for any reason? Do you agree to participate voluntarily in the interview? *[Evaluator notes the responses]* Yes No

Initials of evaluator to indicate receipt of verbal consent: _____ Date: _____

FGD QUESTIONS FOR GHARB EL AALA AGRI-PROCESSING CENTER USERS

- AC01 Can you each tell us how long you have been using the agri-business center, and how do you use it (what function it fills for you)?
- AC02 What did you and other users of the center do before it was open? Did you fill this need in a different way [e.g. maybe used a different center]? How important is this center to you?
- AC03 How do you benefit from the center (as specific as possible)? Does the community as a whole benefit, and if so how?
- AC04 How well does this center meet your needs? Does it function well? Discuss, conclude.
- AC05 Are there ways in which the center could be more accessible or suitable to women? Are there women who would benefit but don't use the center for some reason? Explain.
- AC06 What features of the center would you say are most useful or valuable to you?
- AC07 Are there features that you do not need or that are not useful for some reason? Explain.
- AC08 Who was responsible for establishing the center? Were you part of the initiative to set it up?
- AC09 Did any of you participate on the project steering committee? If so, can you explain the role of the Committee and its strong or weak aspects?
- AC10 Do you know who owns and manages the agri-business center now? Do you think they will be able to keep it operating and well maintained? Why do you think so (or not)?
- AC11 Are community members involved in operating or managing the facility?

FGD QUESTIONS FOR AINATA 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 What did you and other farmers do before the CS was opened? Did you fill this need in a different way [e.g. maybe used a different CS]? How important is this CS to you?
- CS03 How do you benefit from the CS (as specific as possible)?
- CS04 How well does this CS meet your needs? Does it function well? Discuss, conclude.
- CS05 What features of the CS would you say are most useful or valuable to you?
- CS06 Are there features that you do not need or that are not useful for some reason? Discuss.
- 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?
- CS08 Do you know who owns and manages the CS? 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?

ANNEX 5: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

I- USAID/LEBANON DOCUMENTS

CDCS

1. 150224 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 1 - February 2013; Mod 2 – June 2013; Mod 3 – May 2014; Mod 4 – August 2014; Mod 5 – September 2014; Mod 6 – November 2014; Mod 7 – August 2015; Mod 8 – August 2017; Mod 9 – May 2018; Mod 10 – Not dated; Mod 11 – August 2019

Assessments & Evaluations

5. Lebanon Political Economy Assessment – March 2019
6. BALADI CAP Mid-term Performance Evaluation – April 2018
7. Local Governance Assessment – January 2017
8. BALADI Program Assessment – February 2014

II- BALADI DOCUMENTS

Proposal

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

Work Plans

10. Workplans: FY1, FY2 and Q1FY3, FY5, 6 and 7, FY6, FY6-FY7 (NCE), FY7 (NCE), FY7-FY8 (NCE)

M&E

11. Approved M&E Plan – December 2014
12. M&E Tracker Updated 30-9-2019

Progress Reports

13. Year 1 Annual Report (October 2012 – September 2013)
14. Year 2 Annual Report (October 2013 – September 2014)
15. Quarterly Progress Report FY2 -Q1 to Q4
16. Quarterly Progress Report FY3 - Q1 and Q2
17. Quarterly Progress Report FY4-Q1 to Q4
18. Quarterly Progress Report FY5-Q1, Q2 and Q4
19. Quarterly Progress Report FY6-Q1 to Q4
20. Quarterly Progress Report FY7-Q1 to Q4

Weekly Highlights Reports

21. Introducing the Tourism Map of Qab Elias Village (February 2017)
22. Father's Day Celebrations at the USAID-assisted Sports Stadium in Chiyah (June 2019)
23. Twenty-Four Women from Khiyara Municipality gained Food Processing Capabilities through USAID Assistance (June 2019)
24. Launching of the "Eco-Municipality Manual" under USAID BALADI Assistance (Jan. 2019)
25. USAID BALADI Assistance Enabled the Enrollment of 72 New Students in the Technical School in Roumin (January 2019)

26. Clean Energy Saves \$45,000 yearly on Electricity Bill and Fuel Expenses in Zawtar El Gharbieh under USAID BALADI Assistance (June 2019)
27. Enchanting Cultural Initiative under USAID-Rehabilitated Traditional Mill in Kahale (July 2019)
28. Reaping the Benefits of the USAID-Ecovillage in Kawkaba (July 2019)
29. Qob Elias – Wadi El Dalm Community Celebrates the Completion of USAID Assistance to Improve Rural Tourism in the Village (July 2019)
30. Basketball activity for persons with disabilities in the USAID Assisted basketball court in Saida (July 2019)
31. Forty Women from Gharb Al Aala Union of Municipalities Gain Food Processing Capabilities through USAID Assistance (May 2019)
32. Exploring the Spring Season with Community Engagement Activities at Kahale Traditional Mill USAID BALADI Tourism Assistance (May, 2019)
33. USAID-Funded Solar Farm Solves Electricity Shortage in Kfarmishki (Bekaa) (February 2019)
34. Baaloul Village Saves \$25000 on Generator Fuel Expenses (February 2019)
35. USAID Assisted Community Soccer Court Achieving its Goals in Chiyah (February 2019)
36. USAID Visits Completed Community Sports Venue in Chiyah (Baabda) (December 2018)
37. Organizing Clean-up Event to Raise Environmental Awareness under “Saida Stadium for All” USAID- Supported Activity (July 2018)
38. First Pre-Cooling Unit in Lebanon Established within the Cold Storage of Ainata under the USAID-funded BALADI Project (June 2018)
39. “TWO WHEELS ACROSS” features USAID BALADI projects around Lebanon (April 2018)
40. World Environment Day celebrated in Kawkaba under “Go Green Go Kawkaba” (June 2017)
41. BALADI Project under USAID Assistance participated at the Travel Lebanon Fair to showcase BALADI projects (June 2019)

Handbook for Municipal Applications

42. Request for municipal applications - English
43. Grants Processing and Procedure Manual v2 (March 2013)
44. Technical Evaluator Scoring Sheet final
45. Rating Definitions final

Other

46. BALADI Program Outreach Plan for Year 1; Year 2
47. B/CL Organization Chart (2014); (August 2018)
48. Branding Strategy and Marking Plan - “Eco Tourism and Preserving the Heritage of Qab Elias” Project (undated)
49. B/CL List of Training Events

Gender Assessments (x8)

Grant Project Applications (x23 selected projects)

Social Impact

2300 Clarendon Boulevard, Suite 1000
Arlington, VA 22201
USA