

3RF Urban Policy Working Group Minutes of Meeting

Meeting organizers	UN Habitat, World Bank, 3RF Secretariat
Meeting attendees	In person: Ministry of Interior and Municipalities (MoIM); UN-Habitat, World Bank (WB), UNOPS, UNESCO, Live Love, Beirut Heritage Initiative (BHI), Beit el Baraka, Order of Engineers & Architects, 3RF Secretariat (UNRCO) Online: Central Management Unit (PMO), Beirut Municipality, Public Cooperation for Housing (PCH), EU, KfW, UNDP, Beirut Urban Lab (BUL), Lebanese Red Cross
Unable to attend	Directorate General of Local Administrations and Council; Beirut Governorate, Lebanon Reforestation Initiative;
Location	UN ESCWA – Committee Room 1
Date	20 March 2023
Duration	11:00 – 12:30
Meeting nr.¹	1.
Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update on the merger of the Working Groups (WGs) into the ‘Urban Policy WG’ – 3RF Secretariat 2. Overview of the policy recommendations in the Guide for Mainstreaming Housing in Lebanon’s National Urban Policy + Q&A – UN Habitat 3. Update on Beirut Urban Recovery and Development Strategy – World Bank 4. Discussion on a community governance committee / PCU – 3RF Consultative Group Civil Society Organizations 5. Agree on next steps for this WG – Group 6. AOB

Minutes of meeting	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Update on the merger of the WGs into the ‘Urban Policy WG’ – 3RF Secretariat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultations on the strategic way forward for the 3RF have led to the conclusion that there is a need to maintain it as a platform for inclusive policy dialogue. There will be a joint statement released in the next week(s) by the Consultative Group co-chairs confirming this. • Feedback from multiple stakeholders indicated that there were similar or inter-related discussions happening in the 3RF Housing, Municipal Services, and Culture WGs as well as the Lebanon Financing Facility (LFF) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for the BERYT project. • Taking the above into consideration, the three WGs have been merged into this Urban Policy WG,² with the aim to elevate the discussion beyond the project level to the policy level. • Agreement: BUL and Live Love welcomed the above – no objections raised by others. 2. Overview of the policy recommendations in the Guide for Mainstreaming Housing in Lebanon’s National Urban Policy + Q&A – UN Habitat 	

¹ The Urban Policy WG merges the members of the 3RF Housing and 3RF Municipal Service WG, as well as some of the members of the 3RF Culture WG that deal with built heritage. These three WGs have met separately on several occasions in 2022.

² From the Culture WG, only the members working built heritage will join this WG, not those focused on Cultural and Creative Industries.



- **MoIM:** Inquiry about which key government stakeholders have been consulted, and why some are missing in today's meeting.
 - **UN Habitat:** Initial consultations took place at the National Urban Forum (March 2022); the next steps would be to have detailed discussions and consultations with all stakeholders about where we can head next and which policy recommendations would be priorities.
 - **UNRCO:** Clarification that government members of the WG were nominated by the CMU, but others are welcome to join future meetings.
 - **PCH:** The policy recommendations have already been validated by the PCH and by two ministers of Social Affairs, but the economic crisis and blast happened. Therefore, the cabinet of ministers have not yet validated it and it has not been sent to Parliament yet. It may require some finetuning, but it importantly speak about the rights of citizens to adequate housing.
 - **BUL:** Important to think about institutional building in addition to reforms. Once there is a new government, it will be important to push in the direction of having an institution for urban development that protects the public good and is protected from political and business interferences, so that it can operationalize the policies that are dormant at local and national level according to principles of shared governance – e.g. Schéma Directeur d'Aménagement du Territoire Libanaise (national physical master plan for the Lebanese territory), Plan Vert (green plan), Liaison Douce (soft mobility).
- 3. Update on Beirut Urban Recovery and Development Strategy – World Bank (WB)**
- The Technical Assistance under this file would entail strategic and practical level components:
 1. A multi-stakeholder consultative platform to co-develop a cross-sectoral Beirut Urban Recovery and Development Strategy;
 2. Support designing the sustainable institutionalization of coordination and identify needed policy reforms; and
 3. Identify and prioritize pilot projects across the key sectors that are feasible and most impactful for Beirut among stakeholders.
 - It will go through a competitive bidding process, and therefore the ToR cannot be shared.
 - Based on discussions during the last WB mission, the vision and scope have been enlarged, i.e., the original allocated fund from the Lebanon Financing Facility (LFF) may not be sufficient, so the WB team is trying to raise funds from two additional global WB multi-donor trust funds resources: 1) City Climate Finance Gap Fund 2) Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery. There is positive interest so far.
 - Key topics being considered: urban energy efficiency linked to climate change mitigation; urban resilience including disaster risk reduction, housing, green public spaces, walkable city, cultural heritage driver for local economy, municipal services, etc.
 - **BHI:** Inquiry on whether pilot projects would be identified from previous or new studies?
 - **WB:** Pilot projects would be identified through 1) the multi-stakeholder consultative processes, and 2) based on updates and review of existing studies, data, etc. and possibly new studies when needed.
 - **UN Habitat:** Any indications regarding eligibility to apply?
 - **WB:** The procurement process will be open competitive for a firm selection, and will follow the World Bank corporate procurement guidelines.
 - **UNDP:** The LFF Environment project has financing for integration of environment priorities for Beirut. How can this be integrated operationally and linked to this what is the expected timeframe?



- **WB:** Discussions are ongoing to apply and receive additional multi-donor trust fund grants for the activity. The team will follow up to coordinate. The aim is to launch the bidding by June.

4. Discussion on a community governance committee / PCU – CG CSOs

- **Live Love:** Essential to ensure community engagement: the CSOs have been asking for a Planning and Coordination Unit (PCU) to be housed in the governor’s office for more than two years (the ToR have been drafted), this would help programming for the neighborhood. There are so many projects but no coordination. How can we be better, more efficient, with oversight and work collaboratively? CSOs cannot replace government but can help.
- We can’t talk about reform without talking about how? How to generate revenues: e.g. visa schemes for buying land, or social bonds for diaspora to invest in social housing
- The connection between the port and the city is important to keep in mind (ref: 3RF Port WG)
 - **Recommendation:** to have next WG meeting outside of ESCWA
- **WB:** WB procurement regulations dictate that a PCU cannot be funded, but the 2 components of the urban recovery and development strategy will support the design of such a PCU.
- **BUL:** Background to the PCU: it was an ask at the third 3RF Consultative Group meeting Nov. 2021) at the level of municipality, the idea being to build capacity towards urban planning and the implementation of many projects – it has nothing to do with UN Habitat. It was transformed into the WB LFF BERYT project Technical Advisory Committee, which was not our ambition.
 - **Action agreed:** Follow-up on PCU in bilateral meeting between CG CSOs and WB delegation.
- **MolM:** The situation has changed since the publication of UN Habitat’s national housing policy recommendations, therefore the priorities that have emerged may also be different. It will be important to have discussions with all the key stakeholders, we can work on a strategic document that outlines the priorities under each category, also in light of potential WB funding for pilot projects.

5. Agree on next steps for this WG – Group

- Next meeting will likely be in May 2023.
- **Action agreed:** Follow-up on MolM’s suggestion of working on a strategic document on updated priorities in relation to Housing in Lebanon’s National Urban Housing policy.

Documents shared

[Guide for Mainstreaming Housing in Lebanon’s National Urban Policy](#) – UN Habitat

[Beirut City Profile](#) – UN Habitat

PowerPoint Presentation – UN Habitat