



DESTINATION REVIEW FROM A SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL
AND ENVIRONMENTAL PERSPECTIVE IN ADVENTURE TOURISM

LEBANON





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0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

General Overview

Lebanon is a very beautiful country, 10,452Km², with moderate Mediterranean climate, active and dynamic population, but with a corrupted government depleting the natural and economic resources of the country, pushing youth to emigration.

Demographics

The population of Lebanese residents is approximately 4.2 M living in this small area country with about 2.5 M strangers on its land: Palestinian refugees, Syrian refugees, Syrian workers, Iraqi refugees, foreign labor, and other minorities. There are more than 15 M Lebanese emigrants living in foreign countries. There is a huge disparity in living conditions between household in Lebanon. The capital and

greater Beirut area is the most active and wealthy and having medium satisfactory rate of facilities.

Economy

Lebanese economy is based on services representing about 70% of the GDP, and tourism is part of it with approximately 29% contribution. Banking, construction and real estate are the other pillars. Other sectors of the economy are industry (4,4%) and industry 14.7%).

Local Culture

Very diversified culture based on millenary mix with other civilizations and present dynamic youth with modern ideas and vision for a better future.

Infrastructure

No infrastructure in Lebanon. Better develop domestic tourism and niche tourism rather than inbound mass tourism.

Accessible information

Internet is weak in Lebanon for security reasons and corruption, but the country has no other choice than to develop it. The tourist has enough tools and material to find online activities and destinations to visit while in Lebanon.

Environmental profile

Many types of protected areas but spoiled overall environment, Lebanon has problems with solid waste. Nature based tourism is trendy today but natural scenery is becoming a rarity. A new law for protected areas classification has been voted in 2012 but still not enforced until today.

Tourism in Lebanon

Tourism is a main pillar in the country's economy but the budget allocated to the ministry of tourism is ridiculous. The number of tourism has never passed the 2 M visitors with its peak in 2010, just before being hit by the Syrian crisis. Adventure tourism in Lebanon is booming because the young generation is very creative and modern but the government is not following.

Sustainable tourism policies

So Lebanon has no laws to regulate new trends of tourism and there is a big gap between the sub-sector and the public sector. Knowing that Lebanon has signed all the international conventions about biodiversity, environment and sustainable development, one thinks that the chain is coherent, but the reality is different.

Main adventure tourism attractions

The main conventional tourism attractions in Lebanon is archeological sites dated from 4,000 years before Christ to 20th century French protectorate, alpine skiing, food and restaurant and beautiful climate and girls.

On the other side a whole other sub sector of alternative tourism is developing around ecotourism, Trekking, snowshoeing, caving, paragliding, camping, snowcamping, with different style of accommodation meeting with local communities and discovering traditional Lebanese food.



1. SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL PROFILE

1.1 General overview of Lebanon

Capital	Beirut
Population	6.833 M (2018)
Geographical Area	10,452 Km2
Currency	Lebanese Pound (LBP)
Language	Arabic, French, English
Political System	Democratic Parliamentary Republic
President of the Republic	Michel Aaoun – The only Arab country with Christian president.
Religion	Christians 34% / Muslims 54% / Druze 5.6% / Other (Armenians, Alawits, Jews) 6.4% ¹
Weather	January 11 to 17 C; May 15 to 23C; August 25 to 37C
	Rain from October to April, ski from January to March

Lebanon officially known as the Lebanese Republic is strategically located on the eastern part of the Mediterranean Sea. It has always been considered a hub between east and west. It has borders with Syria in the North and the East and with Occupied Palestine in the South.

Lebanon was home to the Canaanites since the third millennium BC, later known as the Phoenicians in the 9thc. BC. Many civilizations crossed its land such as the Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Umayyads, Crusaders, Mamluks, Ottomans and French until Lebanon's modern state foundation in 1920 and independence in 1943, based on historical sectarian system.

A period of prosperity prevailed until 1975, when a civil war started not ending before 1990, and confirming this small country in a new era of corruption doubled with Syrian occupancy and political interference, until 2005, leading to a progressive toggle from Saudi Arabia's influence to Iran supremacy.

So far Lebanon couldn't find political stability and endured repetitive economic seizures especially with the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005, causing the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, followed by the Israeli aggression in 2006 and the outbreak of the Syrian War in 2010 pushing it to the total collapse causing the eruption of civil protests and demonstrations in 17th of October 2019, and forcing on the 29th of October the government, which was formed in January 2019 and composed of 30 ministers of whom are 4 women, to resign. It was replaced by a new cabinet on the 21st of January 2020, with only 19 ministers but comprising 6 women, more than any previous Lebanese government.

The civil protests were triggered by the dangerous economic crisis that was about to explode due to bad management and corruption leading the country into the most severe economic deadlock. The protesters raised their voices against corruption in the public sector, high unfair taxes, blocked sectarian system and

1. Source : Encyclopædia Britannica - www.britannica.com

unchangeable laws that protect the politicians and their parties, depletion of natural resources, inflation, youth unemployment and exodus.

Affected by the twist of fate, Lebanon is fighting today bare hands against the invisible human kind enemy: the Corona Virus Disease (CoViD 19) which is darkening and driving away any chance of quick economic recovery.

Geography

Lebanon in its essence is a mountain that stretches north to south using two ranges, facing the Mediterranean Sea, isolating it from the hinterland of Syria and culminating to 3088 meters in the north of Mount Lebanon range and 2814 meters in the South of Anti Lebanon range. Snow covers its peaks for more than 9 months a year and transforms it into a water reservoir in this arid Middle East.

Loubnan the Arabic form of Phoenician rooted Lebanon's name means the White Mountain, which was adorned by all the ancient civilizations. Between the parallel mountain ranges runs the 120 Km long, 16 km wide in average, high plateau of the Beqaa Valley at 650 meters in El-Qaa in the north and 850 meters in Marjayoun in the South while scoring 1250 meters in Baalbek the water division topographic line. It is exactly here where the Canaanites, centuries before the Romans worshiped their Gods in this fertile land. The Beqaa Valley is part of the Great Rift Valley that stretches from Kenya to Turkey.

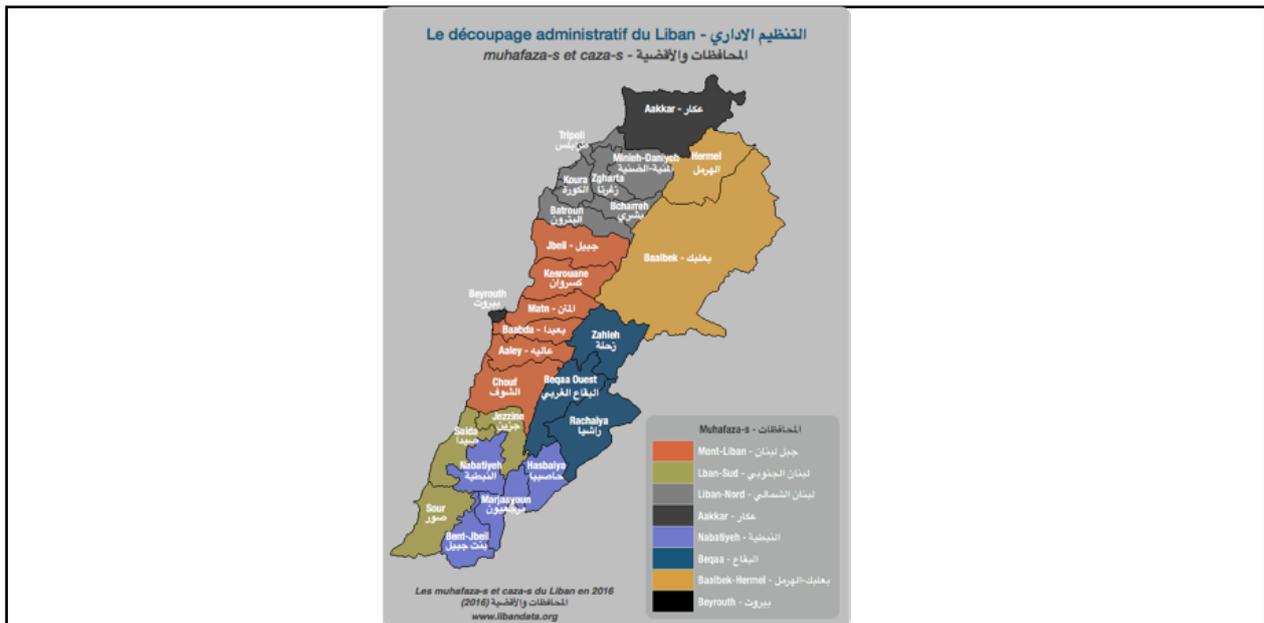
Three rivers take their birth in the Beqaa Valley; two of them are trans boundary rivers: the Nahr el-Aassi which crosses the northern border (38km) reaching Antioch (Antakya) in Turkey (400 km) through Syria, and the Nahr el-Hasbani river that takes its sources from Mount Hermon and crosses the border reaching the Tiberias Lake and considered as the principal tributary of the Jordan river, the third is the Nahr el-Litani river reaching Tyre region (140 km) in the South of Lebanon and feeding on its way the Qaraoun Dam, built in 1959.

Other rivers of Lebanon are short and run westwards digging the deep valleys of Mount Lebanon to the Mediterranean Sea: Nahr el-Kabir, Nahr el Bared, Nahr Qadisha, Nahr el-Jawz, Nahr Ibrahim, Nahr el-Kalb, Nahr Beirut, Nahr el-Damour, Nahr el-Awwali, Nahr el-Zahrani. None of the Lebanese rivers is navigable, and some are seasonal with many recent water dams construction on their course.

1.2 Administrative, political and territorial structure

Lebanon is divided into 8 Districts including Beirut the capital (governorate or Mouhafaza), each divided into a number of Sub-districts (Casa or Qada'), themselves followed by municipalities or local governments.

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS MAP OF LEBANON. (SOURCE: LIBANDATA.COM)



ADMINISTRATIVE GOVERNORATES OF LEBANON AND THEIR CAPITALS

Governorate	Number of individuals/(% of total) ²	Capital of Governorate	Percentage (%) of Residents in the Capital of Governorate
Beirut	341,700 / (7.1)	Beirut (Capital)	7.1
Aakkar	324,000 / (6.7)	Halba city	6.7
North Lebanon	637,900 / (13.2)	Tripoli city	5
Mount Lebanon	2,032,600 / (42)	Baabda city	11.4
South Lebanon	584,400 / (12.1)	Saida city	6.1
Nabatiyyeh	379,200 / (7.8)	Nabatiyyeh city	3.7
Beqaa	297,700 / (6.1)	Zahleh city	3.7
Baalbek/Hermel	245,100 / (5.1)	Baalbek city	4.4
Total	4,842,500*		

Source: Libandata.com

*Due to rounding, numbers presented may not add up precisely to the totals³.

2&3. Source: Central Administration of Statistics
(Labor Force and Household Living Conditions Survey 2018-2019, Lebanon).

Political system of Lebanon

The Lebanese Republic is a democratic parliamentary republic where the power and authority is divided between the president of the republic and the cabinet together. The political system in Lebanon is based on confessionalism in which the religious communities are represented in all the administrative offices in a proportional way. This is confirmed by an unwritten National Pact which testifies that the President of the Republic is Maronite Christian, the Parliament Speaker is a Shia Muslim and the Prime Minister is a Sunni Muslim. The number of deputies is 128, and divided equally between Christians and Muslims. Parliamentary elections are held every four years. The Speaker is elected by the Chamber of Deputies. The President of the Republic is elected by parliament following a two-thirds majority vote for six years, non-renewable. The President consults the deputies who in the parliament nominate the prime minister. The nominated Prime

Minister then chooses, after consulting with the Speaker and the President, 30 ministers to form the cabinet who like parliament are subject to confessional quotas.

Nature reserves are under the custody of the ministry of Environment; the archeological and historical places are under the ministry of culture for management, research and protection, but their commercial use and promotion is under both the ministry of tourism and the ministry of finance. Municipalities have no authority on Nature Reserves, but can manage other types of protected areas called Hima, by declaring a municipal decree. Protected Forests are under custody of ministry of agriculture. Associations and NGOs are related to the ministry of Interior, while Sports Clubs are controlled by the ministry of Youth and Sports; Adventure Activities organizers and Adventure Tourism Operators refer to the ministry of tourism.

1.3 Demographic evolution

Note: There are no official demographic statistics in Lebanon. Multiple sources bring different statistics, and many are not reliable because they are affected by political or sectarian purposes. The following figures are those presented by the United Nations data. Most of the studies include in their numbers all the refugees coming from different backgrounds and situations and periods to Lebanon, such as the Palestinians, the Syrians and the Iraqis, which results in inaccurate reflection of the rates of gender, age range, literacy and employment.

By end of 2018 Lebanon had a Total Population of 6.833 Million inhabitants⁴, and its Current Population is 7.751 Million⁵ as of March 2020 lists, including Lebanese Nationals (4.6M), Palestinian refugees (approx. 470,000); Syrian refugees (approx. 1.5M), Iraqi refugees (approx. 570,000)⁶.

According to the CAS the “estimated number of residents in Lebanon in 2018-19 was around 4.8 Million persons”⁷ , including 80% Lebanese citizens and 20% non-Lebanese⁸.

Density of population is 667 per Km². It is important to note two important factors related to total population figures and the critical demographic situation in Lebanon:

- a. The number of refugees in Lebanon is not accurate because many are not registered at UNHCR, as they do not live in refugees’ camps (unlike in Jordan)
- b. There are other labor expatriates, other than the Syrian workers and refugees, living in Lebanon representing 21.3% of the total working force of Lebanon. These are migrant workers (estimated to 200,000) coming mostly from Ethiopia, Nepal, Bangladesh, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Egypt. They are mainly women working as domestic maidens at home, while the Syrian mostly work in construction in Beirut and agriculture in the Beqaa Valley, and the Egyptians and Bengali workers, they fill jobs in the industrial plants, and gas stations. Lately we have seen a lot of Syrian labor working in hospitals assisting nurses and doctors, in addition to many other jobs such as hair dresser, grocery shops, delivery boy, building porters and janitors, drivers on mini-vans, shepherds in rural areas, etc...

4. Source: www.worldometer.info , as elaborated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2018).

5. Source: www.countrymeters.info, as elaborated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

6. Sources : The World Factbook and UNHCR

7. Source: Central Administration of Statistics (Labor Force and Household Living Conditions Survey 2018-2019, Lebanon).

8. Source: Central Administration of Statistics (Labor Force and Household Living Conditions Survey 2018-2019, Lebanon).

Gender equality

Gender ratio is 0.95 (48.8% male and 51.2% female)⁹. Among women of working age, the labor force participation rate was 29.3%¹⁰.

The age structure is 23% under 15 years, 68 % between 15 and 64 years (productive population¹¹) and 9% above 65 years¹². Which means Lebanon shows a model with stationary type pyramid that is more current for developed countries.

Life expectancy

Total life expectancy at birth is 75 years (Worldometers site communicates 79.27 years) which is relatively higher than the global population average which is 71 years (Male: 73.5 years; Female: 76.6 years)¹³.

MAIN CITIES BY POPULATION IN LEBANON

City	Population
Beirut (with agglomeration)	1,916,100
Tripoli	229,398
Nabatiyyeh and Habbouch	218,433
Saida	163,554
Sour	135,204
Jounieh	96,315
Zahleh	78,145
Baalbek	30,916
Jbeil	20,784

Source: adapted from www.worldometer.info

POPULATION FORECAST FOR LEBANON

Year	Population	Growth rate
2020	6,825,445	-0,44%(2019)
2025	6,397,248	-1,29%
2030	6,194,844	-0,64%
2035	6,241,511	0.15%

Source: adapted from www.worldometer.info

The population forecast for Lebanon is expected to decrease by an average of 0.79% per year. This is due to two main factors, the first is the expected return of a number of Syrian refugees to their home country, Syria; and the second is the emigration of large numbers of Lebanese citizens to foreign countries (European, American, Arab countries) in search for a better living due to the severe economic crisis that is hitting Lebanon in addition to the Corona pandemic virus.

Religious communities of Lebanon

In Lebanon there are 18 different religious communities distributed over three main families as follows:

- **Muslims:** Shi'ite, Sunni, Druze, Ismaili and Alawite.
- **Christians:** Maronite, Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Roman Catholic Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic, Chaldean, Assyrian, Copts, Protestant.
- **Jews:** Sephardi Judaism (most of them emigrated from Lebanon).

9. Source: www.countrymeters.info, as elaborated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

10. Source: Central Administration of Statistics (Labor Force and Household Living Conditions Survey 2018-2019, Lebanon).

11, 12 & 13. Source: www.countrymeters.info, as elaborated by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs.

1.4 Economic Structure

Economic Sectors share in GDP

With its strong historical background, Lebanon is a trade and commerce country. Phoenicians traded overseas and founded trade settlements all over the Mediterranean Sea and on the oceans shores too.

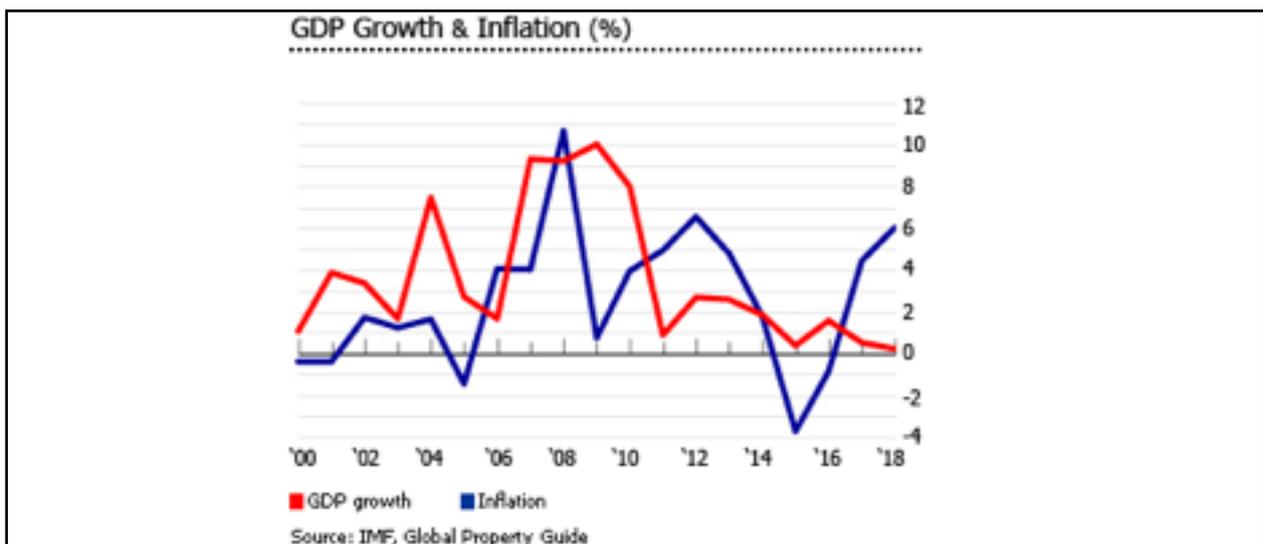
Today, Lebanon's economy is dominated by Services representing 74.7% of the country's GDP, among which tourism contributes for 20%.

Even though Lebanon has fertile lands, abundant water and good climate, agriculture is still an under-developed sector contributing in only 2,9% of the GDP, while industry represents 14.1% of the GDP¹⁴.

The Lebanese diaspora estimated to 18 Million compared to an average of 4.2 Million residents, supports the local economy with up to 20% of the GDP¹⁵. The banking sector, which manages the incoming money from the diaspora, has long been considered as the main pillar of the economy, absorbing repetitive economic shocks such as the assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri in 2005 or the Israeli invasion in 2006, and the Syrian crisis that started in 2011 with over 1.5 Million of Syrian refugees investing the Lebanese land, sucking its resources: water, soil, electricity, jobs, illegal trade, etc.

According to IMF and the WB, Lebanon economy witnessed slow in growth due to the Syrian war and reached its slowest level since 20 years in 2019. It increased by only 0.2% in 2018 and 0.6% in 2017, while the forecasts indicated 1.5 to 2.2% growth.

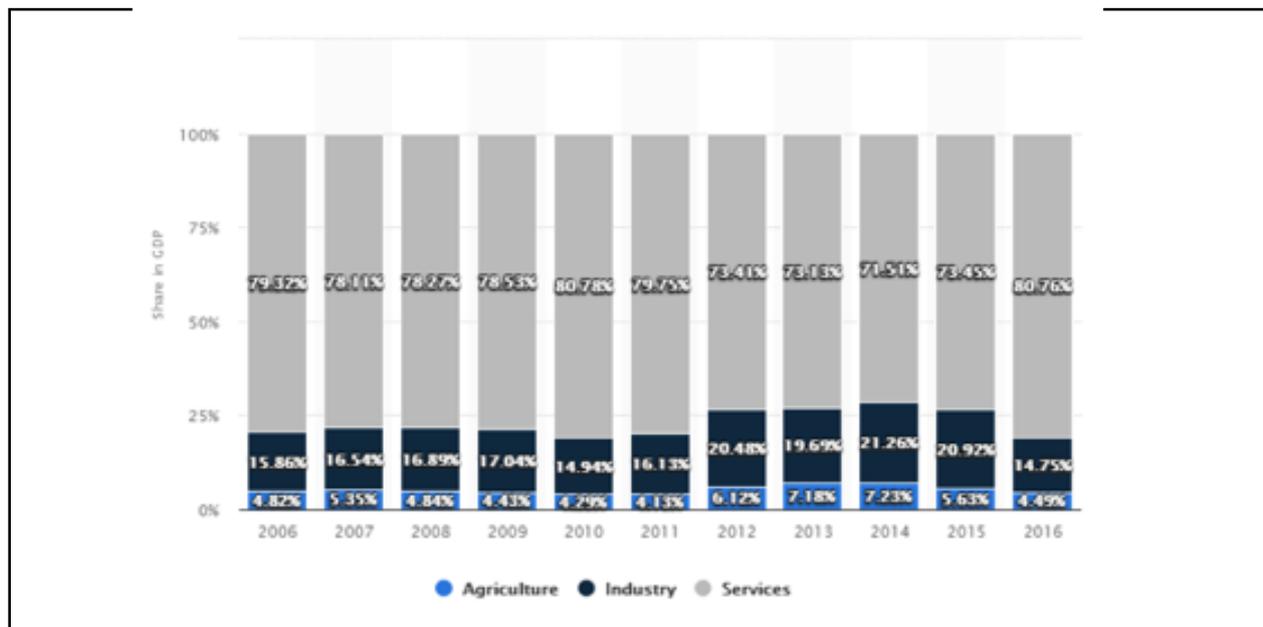
GDP GROWTH & INFLATION (%)



14. Adapted from www.nordeatrade.com

15. Adapted from blog.blominvestbank.com

MAINE ECONOMIC SECTOR'S SHARE IN GDP IN LEBANON



1.5 Employment and living conditions in Lebanon

Living conditions

The population of Lebanon is unevenly distributed on the governorates and departments. Approximately 50% of the population live in Beirut and the greater Beirut area which extends on 4 departments of Mount Lebanon governorate: Aaley, Baabda, Maten and Keserouane.

The Distribution of residents households according to the living conditions index by governorate indicate that most of the wealthy population lives in Beirut and Greater Beirut Areas, reaching approximately 60% of the population.

Employment in rural areas

Historically the local employment in rural areas is agriculture based economy, with in parallel, Lebanese army and official servant employment. Almost all destinations are remote and characterized by rural life driven by small farming activities with the exception of Jezzine where summer tourism was well established since the 19th century, Kfardebiane and Bsharry where alpine skiing has been introduced in mid-50's, and introducing a new local economy.

The introduction of the concept of Protected Areas¹⁶ in rural Lebanon induced a new type of economy based on ecotourism activities, and employment in conservation jobs. This is the case of our 4 nature reserves (Shouf, Bentael, Tannourine and Jabal Moussa).

16. In the Lebanese law most of the protected areas are under the category of Nature reserves.

The case of Ehden (1450 m) is different, because when the people of Ehden acquired the “farmland” of Zghorta (150m) since the 16th century, Ehden has become the summer place. Traditionally olive trees are grown in Zghorta and apple trees grown in Ehden. But tourism took over other economic sectors in Ehden and the advent of the Ehden Forest Nature reserve in late 80s confirmed the tourism character of the mountain town. In result hotels and restaurants opened their doors to new types of jobs in the services sector, in parallel to conservation jobs and adventure activities venues related to the nature reserve.

The Orontes River has another specificity, where tourists used to sit by the riverbanks in small summer hut restaurants and consume grilled trout fish. But another new activity, rafting, boosted the local economy in the years 2000, adding to the charm of the destination.

So for all these reasons rural areas in Lebanon witnessed new types of employment boosting local economy based on services instead of agriculture. The new jobs are described as local hiking guide, forest guard, adventure park owner and animators, equipment rental.

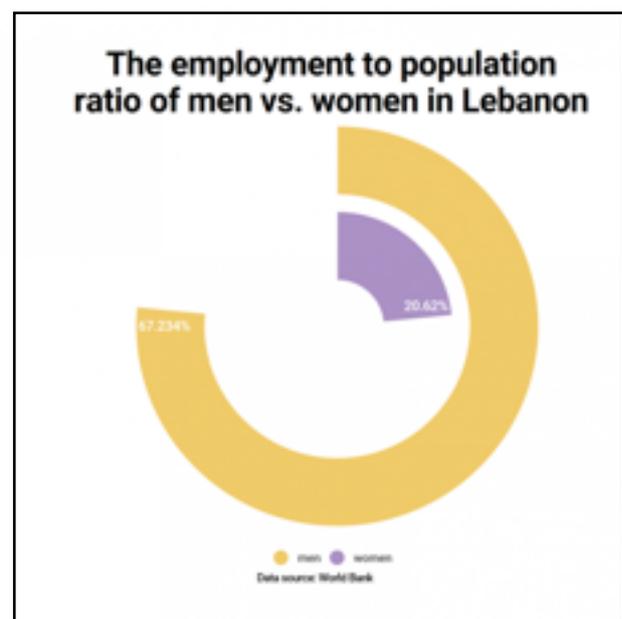
Employment in general

Lebanon un-employment rate reached 6.2% in 2019. Unemployment is one of the most important causes of dissatisfaction among populations in the Arab world, leading to Arab Spring revolutions. And Lebanon has been indirectly affected by these riots and change of regimes all around its borders. This climate of

instability discourages new investments in Lebanon. In parallel to the above, economic difficulties due to corruption and lack of vision at the level of the government coupled with cut in lending by the national bank, resulted in the collapse in the real estate sector in 2018 which represented 14% of the GDP in 2016 and pulling down the construction sector which contributed to another 65 of the GDP in 2016. Additionally, political difficulties between different parties in Lebanon during the last 4 years deprived the country from stable government and from any new regulations or laws that would improve employment rate and job opportunities.

Women employment number in Lebanon is lower than men, but in the same time it depends of the sector. For example in the banking sector, approximately 46% are women employments; other sectors such as education and nursing witness high rates of women too.

EMPLOYMENT TO GENDER RATION IN LEBANON



Demographic evolution around tourism destinations

The destinations described above have different population density, sometime not exponentially matching with the number of visitors. Some destinations have the status of Nature Reserves e.g. Shouf Cedar Biosphere Reserve, Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve and Bentael

Nature Reserve with many villages settled in their buffer zone. But the attraction point is the reserve itself, not the neighboring villages at one exception, the SBR. In the Shouf there are more than 25 villages surrounding the protected area from both western and eastern sides of Mount Barouk, and many are visited frequently due to tourism development there, in collaboration with the SBR.

DEMOGRAPHIC DENSITY VERSUS TOURISM

Governorate	Area / Town	Density	Nbr of tourists per year
North	Akkar / Menjez	800	3,000
	Akkar / Qbayyet area	30,000	10,000
	Bsharry / Qadisha Valley		10,000
	Zghorta / Ehden	24,000	65,000
	Batroun / Tannourine	16,000	50,000
North Beqaa	Hermel / Orontes river	48,000	100,000
	Keserouane / Kfardebiane	20,000	500,000
Mount Lebanon	Keserouane / Jabal Moussa / Biosphere Reserve	4,500	30,000 (2019)
	Jbeil / Bentael / Nature Reserve	150	4,000
	Shouf / Shouf Cedars Biosphere Reserve	x	120,000
South	Jezzine / Jezzine	40,000	470,000

1.6 Local Culture

Cultural life in Lebanon is very intense and diversified. It reflects the plural identities of this mosaic country, and the historical civilizations and present ethnic groups living on its soil. The most important aspect of Lebanese culture is hospitality, generosity and openness of its people, who are able to offer you a drink even before getting to know you.

Languages of Lebanon

The main official language by constitution in Lebanon is Arabic, and the second wide spread language that is used by the government in public spaces and official communication is French, while English is gaining ground on French since it is spoken by the new generations of millennials and iGen generation. Arabic in Lebanon is in its Levantine form while the Arabic learnt in school is the official Arabic language that is utilized in the entire Arabic world from Saudi Arabia to Morocco. French language has been introduced to Lebanon long time ago with traders of aristocratic families

and spoken mainly by the Christian communities who have had historical relations with France since the Middle Ages; but it has been officially recognized with the French mandate over Lebanon (1920 – 1943). The most important French language university in Lebanon is the USJ founded by the Jesuits back in 1875, while the most important English speaking university of Lebanon is the AUB, founded in 1866 as the Syrian Protestant College. Other prominent defenders of the French language in Lebanon are the last French speaking newspaper L'Orient le Jour, and other magazines such as 'Le Commerce du Levant', 'La Revue du Liban'.

Other languages are spoken by small ethnic groups. Armenian language is spoken among the Armenian community members who came to Lebanon in 1915, and is officially recognized by the government as a minority language; and it is taught in Haigazian university in Beirut. Hebrew is no more spoken in Lebanon because the Jewish community (approximately 6,500 in 1970) fled the country during the civil war. Other language of Semitic origins, same as Arabic and Hebrew is the Syriac language, spoken by both the Maronite Christian community as a service religious language in addition to the members of the churches who came from Iraq such as the Syriac church, the Chaldean church and the Assyrian church.

Literature

Lebanon is known for having transmitted the alphabet to the world by the Phoenician ancestors in the 11th c. BC, transmitted the alphabet to the Greeks, but also Lebanese emigrant writers, philosophers and poets

participated in the renaissance of Arab literature by founding the Pen League in New York in 1920. Among the founding members many were of Lebanese origins: Gibrane Khalil Gibrane (author of "The Prophet"), Michael Naaymi (Author of "The Book of Mirdad"), Nassib Arida, Abdel-Massih Haddad, Eliya Abou Madi, Ameen Rihani. Today our pride is the French/Lebanese writer Amin Maalouf (Prix Goncourt Award, 1993; Princess of Asturias Award in 2010 and National Order of Merit from Emmanuel Macron in 2020) who was elected member of the prestigious 'Académie Française' in 2011.

Music

Music in Lebanon is different from any other Middle Eastern country. Traditionally Lebanese music is incarnated in the voice of the Lebanese Diva, Feyrouz who interpreted the songs interpreted by the Rahbani brothers in such a simple way that any Arab world citizen would start his day with her songs; in parallel the male voice of Lebanon was incarnated by the pure chords of Wadiaa es-Safi, while Marcel Khalifeh became the symbol of the human rights with his Oud playing for Palestine and Lebanon.

Modern Lebanese music is a blend between Arabic notes and western moods as translated with musicians such as Rabih Abou Khalil, Toufik Farroukh, Ibrahim Maalouf, Bashar Khalifeh and Omar Rahbani among others.

Multiple music and art festivals are organized in different areas of Lebanon year round and nearly every village has its own summer festival where art is mixed

with food having sometimes religious background. Among these traditional festivals a special flavor is given by the Zajal poetry which is improvised in a competition setting between two groups around a cup of arak and a long Mezza table

Dance and Theater

In the world of dance art, Lebanon's icon is named Caracalla Dance Theater. It is dance company founded in 1968 in Beirut by Abdel Hamid Caracalla, where fusion of styles has been the trend producing a particular Caracalla Dance Style before touring the world, collaborating with the most renowned artists and receiving numerous awards and decorations. Today the colorful heritage is still running in the veins of Abdel Hamid's daughter choreographer Alissar Caracalla and her dance school.

On another note Beirut witnessed the birth of Maqamat Beirut Dance Theater, a contemporary dance company founded by Omar Rajih in 2002. Considered today as "The Founder of the Lebanese Contemporary Dance Scene", Maqamat collaborated and produced other young artists, and their most important achievements today is the creation of BIPOD (Beirut International Platform of Dance, and their yearly international dance festival.

Painting and sculpture

Painting in Lebanon started in the 17th century with the influence of Italian artists from Tuscany, who were invited to Lebanon by Prince Fakhreddine during the

Renaissance period. And in the 19th century the Maronite Church in Lebanon had a principal role in developing iconographic painting influenced by Italian art as demonstrated by Daoud Corm (1852 – 1930). The French Protectorate incited Lebanese talents to develop their art in the Impressionism period. Among these artists were Cesar Gemayel, Moustapha Farroukh and Omar Onsi, who tried to create a Lebanese identity through their art, while the creation of the l'Academie Libanaise des Beaux Arts in 1943 paved the way to many other schools. Today many Lebanese painters, sculptures and designers have shaped the contemporary art scene, and many were women artists, among them: Hussein Madi, Paul Guiragossian, Salwa Rawda Choucair, Ayman Baalbaki, Wajih Nakhleh, Zeina Assy, Huguette Khoury Caland, etc.

Sculpture in Lebanon was dominated by the Basbous brothers who excelled in monumental sculpture. Today their sons continue the journey of their fathers in the art village and open-air museum of Rashana. Other famous sculptures from Lebanon are Rafi Tokatlian, Nadim karam, Dorothy Salhab, Antoine Berberi, Naim Doumit, Rudy Rahme, Nayla Kaai Saroufim, Assaf Brothers, etc.

Haute Couture Fashion designers

Lebanese Fashion Designers are very famous worldwide. Names such as Zuhair Murad, Georges Hobeika, Bassil Soda, Elie Saab, Georges Chakra, Rabih Kayrouz, Tony Ward, have conquered hearts of many renowned people, and won hundreds

of medals on the international scene. For example the “An Ode to Andalusia” collection¹⁷ of Autumn/Winter 2017/2018 from Georges Hobeika had a vibrant energy, inspired by the great architecture of Granada, Sevilla and Cordoba.

Jewelers

Great jewelry designers names from Lebanon are found as well with Mouawad brand for jewelry and watches, who are the main partners for the famous lingerie brand Victoria’s Secret, since 2001 for their “Fantasy Bras” collections where in 2017, according to sources a bra was made of 6,000 pieces of diamonds, yellow sapphire, and blue topaz, all set in an 18 carat gold, costing 2 Million dollars.

Film Directors

Another Lebanese figure is rising high lately, actress film director and feminist activist Nadine Labaky who was nominated for an Oscar in the category for Best Foreign Language Film in 2018 for her Lebanese drama film Capernaum, in which she tackles the problems of Syrian refugees, child abuse and labor situation in Lebanon.

Culinary art

Food is an exquisite experience in Lebanon, as eating the famous Mezza is a journey on its own, with a ‘star couple’ that one cannot miss, Mr. Hommos cream and Mrs. Tabbouleh salad. This is your entry dish to the Lebanese food court.

The diversity in its climate added to the creativity of its people and the historical diversity of civilizations on its land, gave to Lebanese cuisine a local specificity unmatched anywhere else. Confined between Mediterranean Sea and high mountain ranges Lebanon has multiplied different type of dishes, not only fish, poultry and meat but also vegetarian meals, the latter proliferating into creative fusions between traditional cuisine and modern style.

In the opposite clan facing the vegetarian and vegan soldiers there are the hard core meat lovers whose favorite dish is the Kebbeh, a combination between hand crashed meat in a stone mortar and wheat bourghol, which is consumed raw. And then a variety of Kebbeh comes after, for example grilled on charcoal fire, or baked in the oven or fried in hot oil.

It is true that we don’t have hundreds of cheese types but once in Lebanon you cannot miss the Labneh, which is in the middle between yogurt and fresh cheese, deliciously coupled with virgin olive oil and some freshly cut mint leaves from the backyard. Talking about dairy products we have the basic-most but in the same time the riche-most dish called Keshek, based on two ingredients that our ancestors the first dwellers developed from milk and wheat. Varieties of keshek witness some meat that has been conserved in fat (Qawarma) and sometimes potatoes or even some pieces of cabbage.

17. www.abouther.com

Street Food in Lebanon is very rich since one can find all different shapes and prices, from cheap delicious Falafel to all types of grilled meat, passing by the myriads of Lebanese pizza called here Man'oucheh.

Did you say Man'oucheh? Man'oucheh is a cult in Lebanon, especially the one topped with Zaatar (oregano) mixed with sesame seeds, sumac powder and olive oil, then baked in a wooden fire oven. Another variant of all these succulent pizzas is the Saj Man'oucheh which bakes on a metal concave shape oven, which, the latter, you can take on a picnic trip with you.

Bakeries are in perpetual regeneration of ideas, tastes and textures in our country. All types of bread are found in Lebanon, from the French style bread to the micro-thin, 50cms wide pitta bread that we call Mar'ou' or better for your spelling Marqouq. Bakeries developed as well different types of cakes and cookies (Kaak) , assorted with different grains and spices, but the most traditional ones are the rose water soft cookies called Qorban.

Accompanying all these different mouth-watering dishes and meals, is alcohol, which traditionally comes in two wings: Wine since thousands of years and Arak hundreds of years. With approximately 10,500 Square kilometers, Lebanon is a country three times smaller than Catalonia, and two time smaller than Puglia region; but it has more than 65 official brands of wines in addition to hundreds of homemade wines, in different parts of its territory and climates; from the sunny Beqaa Valley to the Mediterranean western slopes of Mount Lebanon. Many

of these wines have won gold medals in international competitions. Wine and beer festivals in Lebanon are a yearly rendezvous, especially in Batroun city where crafted beer is a must visit and taste experience.

Olive oil, oh yes this is another gold story in Lebanon, with at least 10 different bioclimatic areas dictating specific 'terroir' taste and character, without any Designations of Origin yet, unfortunately. Arguably olive oil reached Spain by the Phoenicians, and the oil production of Lebanon (20,000 Tons compared to 250,000 Tons for Puglia region and 70,000 tons for Andalusia) is increasing slowly but with quality. Even though some olive oil farms are visited but tourists, we cannot talk about Oil Tourism yet in Lebanon as it is today the case in Spain or Italy.

But when it comes to preserving the culinary heritage of Lebanon, three local heroes are in the front line. The first is the famous Lebanese traditional cuisine chef Ramzi Choueiry who renovated his art by producing a new book based on regional terroir heritage culinary art, and for the first time in French language: "Le Patrimoine Culinaire du Liban". It is a highly rich book with beautiful pictures of historical places matched with local recipes from different areas of Lebanon reflecting and archiving them for future generations. A masterpiece book.

The second is Kamal Mouzawak with his Souk el-Tayeb movement and weekly farmers market, founded in 2002 by supporting local women and preserving traditional farming and organic production in rural areas, longtime

forgotten by the government; and with his Tawlet restaurants concept presenting these products to the world. In parallel he developed Beit concept which is an extension to Souq and Tawlet by offering accommodation facility to spend the night over in the same place in a local charming traditional guesthouse. Another success story in Lebanon.

The third is the Food Heritage Foundation who works for the preservation of all these traditions of food preservation and transformation, while offering a tourism itinerary based on seasonal crop; in other words supporting farmers by proposing agro tourism packages.

Can one close the food chapter without talking about Lebanese oriental sweets? Of course not. Sweets in Lebanon are another story because we inherited many recipes from the east and the west, and we added some Lebanese love to it: the result is a thousand leaves puff Baklawa stuffed with pistachio and fresh cream, then topped with orange blossoming flowers.

1.7 Tourism Economics in Lebanon and gender equality

Tourism contribution to GDP

The direct contribution of travel and tourism to GDP in Lebanon was LBP 4,998.3 Billion (USD 3.33 Billion) equivalent to 6.5%

of GDP, and the indirect and induced impact was LBP 14,087.8 Billion (USD 9.39 Billion), equivalent to 18.4% of GDP in 2017, forecasted to reach 19.1% of GDP in 2018¹⁸.

Tourist Arrivals

Tourist arrivals reached 1.9 million at the end of 2018, the highest since the record 2 million tourists in 2010. Europeans accounted for the largest share of tourists or 36%, followed by Arab visitors or 29% of total tourists¹⁹.

Tourism employment

Travel and Tourism generated 131,500 direct jobs (6.4% of total employment), in 2017, forecasted to reach 6.6% of total employment in 2018²⁰.

According to BLOM-INVEST BANK study, the net yearly income per household in Lebanon was 30,486USD and forecasted to reach 37,479 USD in 2018.

The GINI index of Lebanon was 31.8% in 2011²¹ and jumped to 51% in 2017²², which explains to inequality in income in this country.

Gender dimension of tourism

We don't have statistics about the size of women employment in tourism in Lebanon. But we think it is worth it to present the below article that Hospitality Magazine published in its July 2018 issue

18 & 20. Source : WTTC Economic Impact Lebanon 2018 edition

19. Source IDAL

21. Source: www.tradingeconomics.com

22. Source : Ministry of Finance in Lebanon and UNDP , 2017.

about “35 Influential Women in Hospitality in the Middle East”. Among the 35 female personalities presented at least 18 are Lebanese Women. Their area of business extends from ministerial position as Director General to restaurant business owners, consultants or CEO to high end hotels. Link: <http://www.hospitalitynewsmag.com/en/event/influential-women-in-hospitality-2018/>

Gender Dimension of Adventure Tourism in Lebanon

Traditional tourism in Lebanon is managed by an army of women in the back office, while the picture with adventure, rural and nature tourism is different. There is a huge misbalance in gender equity on many levels of adventure tourism implementation in Lebanon; not only the pioneers of tourism outdoor activities are men but the local communities who benefits from this type of tourism in rural areas are mostly men. In this perspective, the average number of men local guides in villages and on hiking trails is higher than women. For example the LMTA list of local guides has 20 male guides to only 9 female guides, while traditional tourist guides syndicate has a majority of women.

At the level of accommodation facilities on the LMT, a gender balance is healthier with an equal number of women operating guesthouses or family run hotels and youth hostels.

The goal number 5 of the 2030 Agenda of SDGs is Gender Equality, but a gender

analysis in tourism economic sector should not be limited to SDG5 since sustainability in tourism requires more in depth re-thinking of all the value chain development. And SDGs 8, 9, 12 and 14 all address women empowerment indirectly.

Economic of adventure tourism in Lebanon

There are no statistics for rural tourism in Lebanon. Adventure tourism being part of rural tourism, it is completely in the shadows. And very scarce figures are provided by few service providers in rural areas and all numbers are only estimations, which obviously give only an estimation of the economic activity in terms of number of visitors, receipts, employment and investment. Nevertheless the figures that have been collected sporadically, because of the lack of data in Lebanon, indicate an important activity in spots of adventure tourism as shown in the table below.

ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF MAIN ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES IN LEBANON

Governorate	Area / Town	Average distance from the capital Beirut / km	Nbr of tourists per year	Contribution to destination GDP%	Direct / indirect Employment	Main type of tourism or activity at destination
North	Akkar / Menjez	135	3,000	20	10	Hiking – Cultural
	Akkar / Qbayyet area	138	10,000	8	490	Hiking - Religious
	Bsharry / Qadisha Valley	110	10,000			Hiking / Religious
	Zghorta / Ehdén	120	65,000	70	2,200	Dining - Hiking – Cultural -
	Batroun / Tannourine	80	50,000	1	120	Hiking - Religious
North Beqaa	Hermel / Orontes river	140	100,000	x	x	Rafting – Dining
Mount Lebanon	Keserouane / Kfardebiane	50	500,000	40	1,500	Alpine Skiing – Cultural – Summer Festivals - Dining - Hiking
	Keserouane / Jabal Moussa / Biosphere Reserve	45	30,000 (2019)	x	26	Hiking
	Jbeil / Bentaël / Nature Reserve	47	4,000	x	30-Jan	Hiking
	Shouf / Shouf Cedars Biosphere Reserve	63	120,000	20	62 / 160	Hiking - Cultural
South	Jezzine / Jezzine	70	470,000	40	400	Cultural – Dining - Hiking

Notes:

- The figures above are approximate and only the following destinations are based on record book count down. Among these 3 nature reserves sent their figures: Menjez, Hermel, Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve, Bentaël Nature Reserve, Shouf Biosphere Reserve.
- The following destinations have figures related to diverse types of tourism, e.g. cultural tourism, Sunday restaurant 1 day trips: Kfardebiane, Jezzine, Qbayyet.
- Alpine skiing activity in Kfardebiane has the largest amount of visitors and do not fall under the category of adventure tourism.
- Hermel Orontes river destination has approximately 15 suppliers for rafting activity and represents 100,000 visitor per season (March to October).
- Calculations related to level of employment are not accurate, since a big number of jobs are taken by foreign workers (Syrians) who are not registered.
- Calculations related to contribution of tourism activity to GDP in rural areas are not accurate neither, for the same problem of the foreign labor.
- Not a single destination of those who filled the questionnaires has a real DMO status. Analysis is found in the table below



2. INFRASTRUCTURES AND MOBILITY

2.1 General overview of infrastructure in Lebanon

In Lebanon the word infrastructure is synonym of corrupted government and unfeasible projects. We cannot talk about infrastructure in Lebanon because all stopped with the 1975 war and unfortunately didn't take back activity after the war end in 1990. The dream of Prime minister Rafik Hariri was cut with his assassination in 2005. Between 1990 and 2005 he tried to change this curse and during his mandate as Prime Minister to Lebanon (period I: 1992 to 1998 and period II: 2000 to 2004) he really started this large project by rebuilding the Beirut City Center, modernizing the airport, modernizing few roads and bridges in the capital; he even tried to bring a Formula 1 Grand Prix to Lebanon, but political conflicts with Syria resulted in his assassination. Since then all stopped or was done in a shy and un-professional way.

2.2 Hard infrastructure

Lebanon lost its train railway and Beirut city tramway during the civil war, and couldn't rebuild them even after 30 years after the war, because of corruption of the political class.

The roads network of Lebanon is mostly old and rarely well designed after the French protectorate. New roads and bridges in the cities are not well incorporated into the urban fabric which creates daily traffic jams.

Public transportation in Lebanon is very weak; the network linking the main cities to the rural areas is non-existent. Private vans operate on some road axes but they are not reliable since they are not organized in time, quality and safety.

Road signs are poor in Lebanon and often only in Arabic language and sometimes not even existing.

Google engine though works very well since most of the roads network has been uploaded by private sector funded by different aid projects.

The only river in Beirut is not navigable since it is mostly dry all year long due to over pumping of its water in the mountainous areas; transforming it to a sewage water current in summer.

The remaining rivers of Lebanon are not navigable neither.

Shipping between the main cities does not exist due to international security measures.

There is only one airport in Lebanon located south of Beirut city. It is not well served with roads and making the 5km distance from Beirut center to the airport may take more than 60 minutes in peak hours. Other airports are only for military usage and they are not used them internally.

Traffic at Beirut Rafik Hariri International Airport reached 72,279 passengers aircraft flights in 2019 (1.83% less than 2018), air freight not included, and witnessed 8,689,603 passengers in 2019 (1.72% less than 2018).

2.3 Soft infrastructure

In the cities the roads are not equipped with walk sides or bicycles lanes, so it is not safe at all to use the bicycle on the main roads of the cities or on the links between the main cities.

Hiking Trails

Many hiking trails exist in Lebanon, based on the ancestral footpath network that used to link villages by crossing deep valleys. All of the hiking trails of today are used for tourism purposes and a limited number is still used by shepherds with their herds, for grazing and rarely for seasonal transhumance as they have lost tradition and replaced it by transfers with trucks on paved road.

The most important hiking trail in Lebanon is the Lebanon Mountain Trail, 470 Km long, but is not linked to any other international trail because of safety and war situations in all the neighboring countries around Lebanon. But the LMT Association has built friendship with different international trail associations in the world with Jordan, USA, Canada, South Korea and Costa Rica. LMTA is a member as well in the Mediterranean Trail Network and participates to yearly events abroad.

Different other trails exist in scattered parts of the country but without really composing a network on the ground. And there is a lack in signs unification system in Lebanon. So different sign or indications systems are used in protected areas or in municipal land areas without any coordination between each other, creating some confusion with the hikers.

2.4 Accessible Information an heritage and culture

Lebanon is doing a lot of improvement in terms of online networking and information, but the network itself is not efficient compared to European countries and the quality and debit of the connection is weak, as most of the regions in Lebanon connect with 3G, rarely with 4G.

The websites of the ministry of tourism: www.destinationlebanon.gov.lb and www.living-lebanon.org are both very weak , not updated, so nobody uses it since it is not modern and trendy.

But the private sector has developed many tools to make the information more accessible. Online portals such as www.lebtivity.com offer a wide range of ideas, events and activities to do and place to visit, restaurants, nightlife, and arranges it into an agenda style for better planning.

Another online tool is Live Love Beirut who givesacompleteideaaboutalltheactivities that one can select and book online in addition to volunteering activity id desired. There are different social media pages as wellinusebyNatureReserves,Associations, Clubs and Tour Operators to facilitate planning your cultural, sports or tourism activities in different places of Lebanon. "Time Out" have their version for Beirut too. "Like a Local" have as well their version for Beirut , where you can book your local guide online. Guides are local residents who love their city and would love to share their experiences with visitors.

The “cultural trip” is developed online by local Lebanese lady and gives many ideas of the landmarks of the capital Beirut. Lebanon Traveller Magazine is a printed magazine but has its online version too and offers tips and articles about activities to do all over Lebanon.

L’Agenda Culturel: online listing of all types of cultural activities.

In Lebanon the Tourism Board is inactive, and there is no DMO; but the Shouf Nature Reserve in the Shouf area is playing a similar role, by sending periodic news via facebook telling stories about the biosphere reserve and announcing events; same situation with a couple of municipalities in south Lebanon: Jezzine (www.jezzineturism.com) and Rashaya (www.Rashaya.org).



3. ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE

3.1 General Overview

Lebanon is endowed with a beautiful nature, rich in water, vast areas of forests, snow topped mountains, deep valleys and diverse flora and fauna.

Located on the Eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea at the crossroads between Europe, Asia and Africa, Lebanon is influenced different biotopes dominated by a typical Mediterranean climate. Four principal factors have interacted in this region to produce an exceptionally rich and unique biodiversity: biogeography, geology, ecology and historic human settlements in the Mediterranean area (Blondel and Aronson 1999). More than any other region in the world, the Mediterranean region best exemplifies the environmental change in response to man environment interactions. Lebanon is an integral region in the Mediterranean Basin, it falls within a recognized center of plant diversity and is considered a global hotspot (Myers et al. 2000).

The topography of the country imposes various micro-environments for both terrestrial and fresh water biodiversity, most ecosystems, however, have narrow ranges and their biotypes are struggling for existence against a changing environment.

Geomorphological regions

There are five geomorphological regions in Lebanon (CDR/ECODIT-IAURIF, 1997):

1. Coastal zone, 250 km long, including the shoreline and continental shelf, the coastal plains and the foothills of Mount Lebanon up to elevations of 250 meters.

2. Mount Lebanon range, about 160 km long and 25-40 km wide, includes middle and high elevation zones above 250 meters. It rises from Akkar in the North and extends South to the hills of Jabal Amel. Mount Lebanon peaks at 3,088 meters at Kornet es-Saouda in the north.

3. Beqaa plain, a land depression separating the Mount Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon ranges. It comprises an 8-12 km wide fertile corridor and is about 120 km from North to South. The Beqaa plain is drained by the Aassi River from the North and by the Litani River from the South

4. Anti-Lebanon range, extends across the Lebanese-Syrian borders. It peaks at 2,600 meters (Tallat Moussa). Slopes are generally more gentle compared to Mount Lebanon. The southern sections of the Anti-Lebanon range include Jabal el Cheikh (Mount Hermon), which intercepts rainwater and redistributes water into at least three main watersheds across Lebanon, Syria and Palestine.

5. South Lebanon, an elevated plateau that extends a short distance inland from the western shores of South Lebanon to the Mount Hermon foothills in the East. This region is intersected by many seasonal streams flowing from west to east and discharging into the Mediterranean Sea.

Geological overview

Lebanon consists almost exclusively of limestone. Most are of Cretaceous origin, with Jurassic limestone in some areas,

principally in the south. Only in a few places, especially in the north at Akkar, do basaltic rocks appear.

Climate

The climate is subject to considerable variation according to altitude and locality. Generally it can be described as Mediterranean, with a few particularities. Predominantly westerly winds bring abundant rain—principally in winter—while the summers are mainly dry. Coastal areas receive over 800 mm of rain p.a., and most montane areas over 1000 mm. Most rain falls on the western slopes of the Lebanon range, with the summits receiving less than lower areas. The Beqaa valley and Anti-Lebanon generally receive less than 700 mm and the Hermel semi-desert in the northern Beqaa less than 250 mm.

In coastal areas, the mean temperature during the year is 20 °C while above 1800 meters it is around 10 °C. Most high mountains in both ranges are snow-covered until July or August and on the peaks, isolated pockets of permanent snow occur in shaded places. The climate is subject to considerable variation according to altitude and locality. Generally it can be described as Mediterranean, with a few particularities. Predominantly westerly winds bring abundant rain—principally in winter—while the summers are mainly dry. Coastal areas receive over 800 mm of rain p.a., and most montane areas over 1000 mm. Most rain falls on the western slopes of the Lebanon range, with the summits receiving less than lower areas. The Beqaa valley and Anti-Lebanon generally

receive less than 700 mm and the Hermel semi-desert in the northern Beqaa less than 250mm.

Vegetation

The vegetation of Lebanon which is mostly part of the Mediterranean is dominated by maquis or matorral and includes representatives from the genera *Juniperus*, *Myrtus*, *Olea*, *Pistacia*, and *Quercus*. This vegetation is similar in appearance to the chaparral vegetation of California and the matorral of Central Chile. Unfortunately, the maquis in many Lebanese areas is degraded into garrigue.

In fact, the Lebanese natural landscape is rich, offering 9,119 species of which 4,633 are plants and 4,486 animals (NBSAP 1998). Floristic richness is estimated to include 2,600 vascular plant species of which c.400 are endemic to Lebanon, Syria and Palestine (15%) and c.92 are endemic to Lebanon (3.5%) (BCSR).

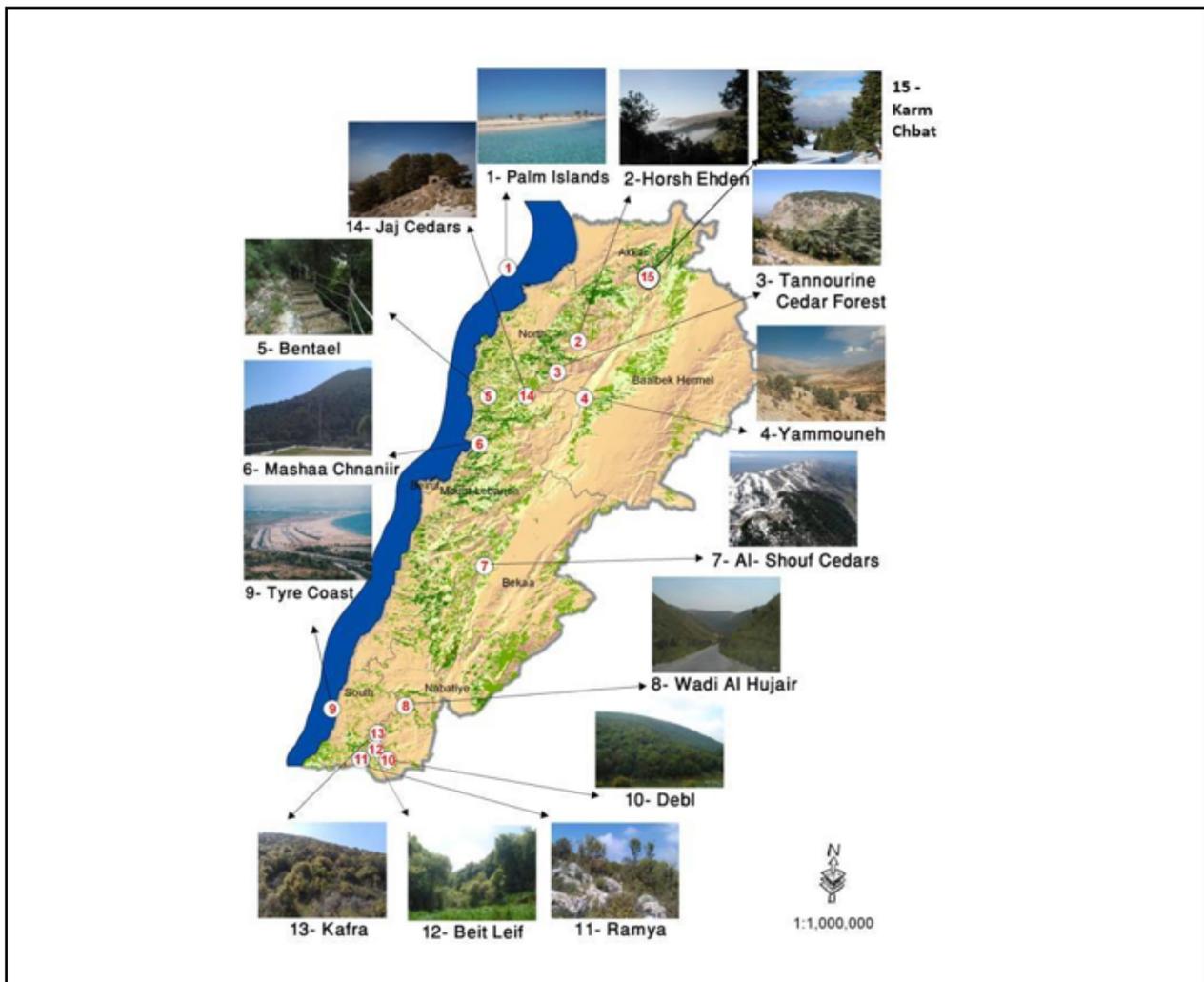
3.2 Protected Areas

Many protected areas are found in Lebanon under different jurisdictions. Ministry of Environment manages 'Nature Reserves' by law regulations, while Ministry of Agriculture manages forest and declares part of these forests as "Protected Forests"; municipalities have the power as well to declare "Hima" areas that fall under their homeland with a municipal decree. On the private sector level, natural areas can become a "Privately Owned Protected Area" if the landlord is a visionary.

Please refer to Annex A below, for Categories of Protected Areas in Lebanon and information about the new law 2012.

The draft Protected Areas Framework Law was submitted to the Parliament through the decree No. 8045 dated 25/4/2012 and was discussed by the Parliamentary Committees which approved its latest amendments and is currently pending final endorsement. The Draft application decree consequently developed sets the legal framework for the various categories of PAs including objectives, classification, management and financing mechanisms – making it possible for the bodies managing future natural parks to apply for loans and to work with the private sector.

TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF NATURE RESERVES IN LEBANON



TERRITORIAL DISTRIBUTION OF NATURE RESERVES IN LEBANON



Description under a “tourism perspective”

According to ATTA, “Adventure tourism is a tourist activity that includes physical activity, a cultural exchange, or activities in nature”. In the same time adventure tourism is very popular among young generations who need to experience different levels of self-testing, a bit of risk-taking and a lot of personal challenging.

Tourism can contribute to achieve most of the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals if well planned and implemented. It is mainly referenced directly in SDGs 4, 8 and 12.

SDG 4: Life Below Water

SDG 8: Decent Work and Employment

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

It is difficult to achieve the sustainability of tourism without implementing the triple bottom line of sustainable development that relies on a) protecting the environment, b) safeguarding cultural heritage and c) supporting economic equity, all powered by solid management approach.

In Lebanon the majority of the adventure tourism destinations don't have any sustainable development base.

Rafting on the Orontes River in Hermel is practiced without any regulations to protect the river environment.

Visiting the Baatara pothole in Tannourine area is no more an exciting experience due to all the infrastructure and equipment (metal cables, stairs, kiosks, toilets, restaurants, etc) that has been installed lately by the association that runs and manages the “National Natural Site”.

Climbing the Mount Hermon in Rashaya el-Wady has lost its wild aspect due to herds of hikers encouraged to visit the mountain by the municipal board. Hills of litter are generated in parallel to noise pollution and 4x4 invasions.

The remaining places where high levels of protection are reached are in the Nature Reserves. All of them have founded groups of volunteers to help in critical seasonal periods.

In the Shouf Biosphere Reserve, efforts are being made to distribute visitors’ influxes on different entrances²³ in an attempt to reduce congestions at el-Barouk entrance in summer peak time.

In Bentaël Nature Reserve, the team is trying to find new adapted activities to the school groups, trying to engage them and educate them to environment protection via educational and fun activities.

In Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve they are trying to diversify the trails network to allow the visitor different experiences

with breath taking panoramas, and in the same time they are trying to connect with the surrounding villages in the buffer zone to develop new experiential activities, for example with Chahtoul Camping facility where the visitor as allowed to spend quality time in the wilderness without harming nature.

On the other side the trendy nature-based tourism activities have encouraged investments to flourish in the areas surrounding the nature reserves, in the wilderness and in the villages. But this interesting development is not being accompanied by any development management of the sector, and many newcomers are witnessing difficulties for different reasons, such as misbalance between demand and supply, or wrong location, or lack in hospitality skills, or unjustified high prices, etc.

Other management bodies are found in the destinations listed above but the efforts are still weak.

The protected pine forest of Bkessine in Jezzine area is witnessing huge amounts of litter due to summer visitors and hikers who are using the forest without local guides or any control. In parallel La Maison de la Forêt facility adventure park is installed inside the pine forest and producing noise pollution and waste water pollution, not to mention its high price range, which is not accessible to modest economies.

It is important to note that the Bkessine pine forest is a private property forest

23. In the Shouf Biosphere Reserve there are 5 entrances.

and classified under economic protected forest category due to its pine kernel grains production which supports economically a large number of people in the area.

In Kfardebiane area the municipality who manages tourism activity is allowing climbing activity on the unique Natural National Heritage Monument, the Natural Rock Bridge of Nabaa el Laban, ignoring the classification of the site for the sake of enjoyment of the activity. They don't even have a carrying capacity or an EIA study of the site.

In Menjez the municipality has installed agreements with different bodies, among which respected universities, to implement rigorous development and management plans to its natural surrounding area. They have increased the forest area by planting new native species of trees such as Carob trees and Oak trees and in parallel they have safeguarded their cultural heritage by asking permission to the ministry of culture to refurbish with experts, the archeological sites. This has added flavor to the adventure experience that a visitor witnesses while hiking in the area.

Annex A – Categories of Protected Areas.

Adapted from Source:

www.biodiv.be/liban/biodiversite-au-liban

Defining protected areas (PA) is an important step towards the acknowledgement of the ecological and cultural national heritage. Lebanon has been designating nature sites and landscapes as PAs since the 1930's, responsibility for such designation originally fell under the jurisdiction of Ministry of National Economy.

Since the establishment of the MoE in 1993, PAs establishment has been reattributed to the MoE. A specific category (Protected Forests) is under the mandate of MoA.

Within the framework of the Stable Institutional Structure for Protected Areas Management (SISPAM) project (2004-2006), MoE has exerted efforts and presented legally sound solutions for several concerns related to proper and sustainable PA management.

The current PAs in Lebanon are divided into three categories

1. Nature Reserves established by laws since 1992

NATURE RESERVES IN LEBANON

Nature Reserve	Legal Instrument	Date of Creation	Approximate Surface Area(ha)	Elevation Zone (meters)	International Designations
Horsh Ehden	Law 121	9-Mar-92	1,740	1,200 - 1,900	Important Bird Area
Palm Islands	Law 121	9-Mar-92	417.73	Sea Level	Ramsar Site, Specially Protected Area, Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI), Important Bird Area
Karm Chbat	Decision 14/1	6-Oct-95	520	1,400 - 1,900	None
Al Shouf Cedars	Law 119 Law 532	24-Jul-96	15,647	900 - 2,000	Biosphere Reserve, Important Bird Area
Tyre Coast	Law 708	5-Nov-98	3,889.25*	Sea Level	Ramsar Site, Specially Protected Area of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI)
Bentael	Law 11	20-Feb-99	75.31	250 - 800	Important Bird Area
Yammouni	Law 10	20-Feb-99	2,100	1,400 - 2,000	None
Tannourine Cedar Forest	Law 9	20-Feb-99	195.48	1,300 - 1,800	Important Bird Area
Wadi Al Houjeir	Law 121	23-Jul-10	3,595	250 - 400	None
Mashaa Chnaniir	Law 122	29-Jul-10	27	500 - 530	None
Kafra	Law 198	18-Nov-11	40	~650	None
Ramya	Law 199	18-Nov-11	20	~650	None
Debl	Law 200	18-Nov-11	25	~600	None
Beit Leef	Law 201	18-Nov-11	20	~550	None
Jaj Cedars	Law 257	15-Apr-14	20	~1,650	None

Sources: MoE, 2015

*Land: 176.32, Sand: 6.12, Water: 3,706.81

2. Nature sites under the protection of the Ministry of Environment

established by MoE decisions or decrees based on MoE proposals on the base of the law of protection of natural sites (08/07/1939)

NATURAL SITES UNDER THE PROTECTION OF MOE

#	Decision/Decree number	Date	Description	Location
1	Decision 15/1	1995	Prevent any action or making any changes in the vicinity of Faqra Natural Bridge in the district of Kesrouan	Kesrouan
2	Decision 151	1997	Kadisha Valley	Bcharre
3	Decision 34	1997	Ibrahim River to sea outfall	Jbail
4	Decision 22	1998	Al Jawz River to sea outfall	Batroun
5	Decision 29	1998	Al Damour River to sea outfall	Shouf
6	Decision 97	1998	Al Kalb River to sea outfall	Kesrouan
7	Decision 130	1998	Beirut River to sea outfall	Beirut and Mount Lebanon
8	Decision 131	1998	Al Awali River to sea outfall	Saida
9	Decision 132	1998	Forests between Ain El Hour- Daraya- Debiyé- Bérjin; Sheikh Osman Forest; Deir al Mokhalis surrounding; Ain w Zein Hospital surrounding; Dalboun forest; Al Mal valley; Kafra wells; Ainbal valley sites	Shouf
10	Decision 187	1998	Al Makmel Mountain	North Lebanon
11	Decision 188	1998	Arka River to sea outfall	Akkar
12	Decision 189	1998	Al Assi River to sea outfall	Hermel
13	Decision 19	2002	Al Kammoua Area	Akkar
14	Decision 21	2002	Al Qaraqeer Valley	Zgharta
15	Decision 22	2002	Dalhoun Forest	Shouf
16	Decision 8	2004	Baatara Sinkhole	Tannourine
17	Decree 7494	2012	JabalMoussa	Kesrouan
18	Decree 11949	2014	Kassarar Grotto	Metn

Source: MoE, 2015

3. Protected forests established by MoA decisions

(before 1996 based on the Law of Protection of Forest Wealth and Forests (Law 85 dated 1991); and after 1996, protected directly by the Law of Protection of Forests (Law 558, dated 24/07/1996) and through MoA ministerial decisions issued based on this Law).

Hima and Forests declared by Minister of Agriculture Decision

#	Description	Decision
1	National hima from Maaser Al Shouf to Dahr El Baydar	Decision no. 127 of 1991
2	National Marine hima at the Marine Sciences Center (Batroun)	Decision no. 129 of 1991
3	National hima in Al Kammoua mountain (Akkar)	Decision no. 165 of 1991
4	National hima in Kfar Zabad village (Zahle)	Decision no. 71 of 1992
5	National hima in Hbaleen	Decision no. 152 of 1992
6	Tannourine, Hadath El Jebbe, Jaj and Al Arz forests	Decision no. 499 of 1996
7	Cedar forest in Swaysi area (Hermel)	Decision no. 587 of 1996
8	Cedar, Shouh, juniper forest in A Kammoua (Akkar)	Decision no. 588 of 1996
9	Cedar, Shouh and juniper forest in Karm Chbat (Akkar)	Decision no. 589 of 1996
10	Cedar, Shouh, juniper, oak, ofis, and malloul forest in Bezbina (Akkar)	Decision no. 591 of 1996
11	Knat forest	Decision no. 592 of 1996
12	Bkassine forest	Decision no. 3 of 1997
13	Cedar, Shouh, juniper, oak, ofis, and malloul forest in Ain AlHokaylat and AlKeif Kirnet and shalout (Al Diniyé)	Decision no. 8 of 1997
14	Cedar and juniper forest in Jurd Al Njass – Al Arbaen mountain (Al Diniyé)	Decision no. 9 of 1997
15	Cedar and ofus forest in Sfiné village (Akkar)	Decision no. 10 of 1997
16	Cedar, Shouh, juniper forest in Marbine - Jhanam Valley (Akkar)	Decision no. 11 of 1997
17	Chebaa valley	Decision no. 174 of 1997

Source: MoE-SISPAM 2006

In addition, there are many candidate natural areas that are in need of national protection.

Today, "Nature Reserves" is the most well-established, managed, and studied form of PAs in the country. For the purpose of protecting natural habitats and endemic and endangered species, Lebanon has created fifteen nature reserves.

Nature reserves are created through legislative texts defining their limits, objectives, prohibited and allowed activities within the reserves and within a 500-meter buffer zone, penalties, and management committees to be in charge of the reserves. To date only 6 out of the 15 reserves have management plans.

Nature reserves occupy around 2.7% of the country's area and incorporate rich biodiversity with about 370 different kinds of birds and 2,000 types of plants and wild flowers, many of which are endemic to Lebanon. The nature reserves also host 30 species of mammals, including the wolf, hyena, wildcat, porcupine and squirrel.

Nature reserves have an important role in the protection and sustainable management of natural resources, especially biodiversity. They constitute as well a crucial component in local and rural development, through the influx of visitors who contribute via ecotourism, in augmenting the income of local communities living within the area of natural reserves. The reserves' committees always work on enhancing the benefits of local communities without compromising the reserve's status by involving locals in their activities. For example, visiting and

trekking guides are trained locals in all reserves, visits to the Palm Islands are solely scheduled via local fishermen and boat owners, and Al-Shouf Cedar Reserve implemented a rural development project whereby visitors are introduced to local crafts and can purchase local products labelled as products of the reserve.

Furthermore, nature reserves in Lebanon have a major awareness and educational role. Inventories of floral and faunal species are available for each reserve, research projects are ongoing as part of the reserves' activities, knowledge is transferred through the reserves' websites, pamphlets, brochures, books, television interviews, magazines, newspapers, and educational activities. One of many examples are the activities of the Association for the Protection of Jabal Moussa (APJM); the APJM published a book for children entitled 'Tabsoun Tabsoun' and books for adults namely; 'Guide des Flores', 'Guide des Arbres' and 'Biodiversity Album'. APJM conducts several animation events organized in various private and public schools and has more than one hundred and fifty published articles about Jabal Moussa Biosphere. Another example of a nature reserve that strongly works on promoting awareness and education is Al-Shouf Biosphere Reserve. Students are introduced to the rich biodiversity of the reserve and are taught to read animal prints and trails. An annual awareness activity entitled 'Rally for Nature' is conducted by Al-Shouf Reserve with the objectives of familiarizing the students and building up their knowledge on the importance of forests and biodiversity; reconnecting the young generations with

nature; and exploring the trails of the reserve.

In order to better enhance the management of PAs, the MoE has prepared a new categorization system for PAs defining criteria for the establishment of each category in addition to their management objectives and modality. In 2002, the MoE created a first draft of the PAs Law; which was further amended in 2006 and then in 2012. The amendment included the following four categories with unique management objectives:

1. **Nature Reserve** which is defined as a terrestrial or marine zone in which ecosystems, habitats and species of specific importance must be protected because they are either endemic, or rare or endangered. The conservation of those species and ecosystems may require maintenance or rehabilitation activities if needed, in a way that suits with the protection objectives, and that are described in a management plan; in order to ensure the conservation of those habitats and the species that they harbour.
2. **Natural Park** which is defined as a vast rural territory, partially inhabited, with exceptional natural and cultural heritage, recognized nationally and deserving protection on the long term. A Natural Park can include one or more PAs or areas that might eventually become protected;
3. **Natural Site and Monument** which corresponds to an area containing one or more natural features of exceptional importance which deserve protection because of their rarity ,

representativeness or beauty; and

4. **Hima** which is defined as a Community Based Natural Resources Management (CBNRM) System that promotes Sustainable Livelihood, Resources Conservation, and Environmental Protection for the human wellbeing (UNU-INWEH). A Hima is under the supervision of the municipality, the union of municipalities or the Qaimaqam.

Sites with International Classification

At the international level, some sites are recognized by international entities and conventions; i.e. World Heritage sites by UNESCO, Ramsar sites under the Ramsar Convention, and important Birds Areas (IBAs) under BirdLife International, Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance (SPAMI) under the Specially Protected Areas (SPA) and Biodiversity Protocol.

UNESCO-MAB has identified three sites as Biosphere Reserves

- The Shouf Biosphere Reserve (2005), which includes Al-Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve and Ammiq Wetland as well as 22 surrounding villages;
- The Jabal Al Rihane Biosphere Reserve (2007); and
- The Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve (2008).

The Valley of Qannoubine and the Arz El Rab Cedar Forests are listed as cultural landscapes by UNESCO World Heritage.

Four Ramsar sites of wetlands of international importance are recognized in Lebanon

- Ammiq Wetland: Ramsar Site No. 978 (16/4/1999)
- Raas Al-Chaqaa: Ramsar Site No. 979 (16/4/1999)
- Tyre Coast Nature Reserve: Ramsar Site No. 980 (16/4/1999), and
- Palm Islands Nature Reserve: Ramsar Site No. 1079 (3/8/2001)

Two sites are listed as “Specially Protected Areas of Mediterranean Importance” (SPAMI) by the SPA and Biodiversity Protocol

- Tyre Coast Nature Reserve
- Palm Islands Nature Reserve

Fifteen sites are listed as Important Bird Areas (IBA) by Birdlife International, listed below

- Horsh Ehdén Nature Reserve
- Palm Islands Nature Reserve
- Ammiq Wetland
- Al-Shouf Cedar Nature Reserve
- Hima Anjar / Kfar Zabad
- Lake Qaraoun
- Riim / Sannine Mountain
- Bentaél Nature Reserve
- Tannourine Cedars Nature Reserve
- Hima Ebel es-Saqi
- Semi Deserts of Ras Baalbek
- Beirut River Valley
- Upper Mountains of Akkar-Donnieh
- Jabal Moussa Mountain
- Ramliéh Valley



4. Destination Strategy and Management

4.1 Tourism in Lebanon. Numbers

Despite the chaotic situation described above, the adventure tourism scene in Lebanon has specific characteristics as shown below:

- Absence of a unified strategy or national strategy from the public sector.
- Total absence at legislative level to create new laws that match the development of the adventure tourism in Lebanon.
- Continuously evolving private sector, led by young entrepreneurs who travelled abroad and got influenced by the international scene (Europe, Canada, USA, Australia)
- Few professional self-made / self-controlled tour organizers, known in Lebanon as Eco-Tour Operators, most of them founded in late 90's.
- Few serious and very professional clubs considered as pioneers in the field of caving have been created in early 90s.
- Few individual pioneers in extreme mountaineering have culminated highest peaks of the globe²⁴, and have influenced many young people towards outdoor activities.
- oCascade of clubs and individuals who operate trips to rural areas and nature spaces, with panoply of exciting but non-regulated activities; reaching about 20 groups in 2009 and more than 125 groups in 2019. This proliferation has been facilitated by the use of social media technologies.
- The most spread activity is hiking with different levels and duration.
- Creation of LMT Association (LMTA) in 2004, specialized in trail protection and development.
- Creation of DHIAFEE project (2005), specialized in guesthouses development in rural areas.
- Many soft adventure attraction parks mushroomed in different areas in Lebanon (Sharewood Camp, Ehden Adventure, Afqa La Reserve, etc.) and contributed to the propagation of adventure tourism in the country.
- Main sport equipment traders have started to import professional adventure activity gear (Mike Sport, Maison du Ski, Sports Experts, Sports for Ever, etc.) and contributed to the increase in consciousness of adventure spirit.

24. Maxime Chaaya, Joyce Azzam, Avedis Kalpaklian, etc.

The most interesting regions of Lebanon, where adventure tourism found fertile land to develop are shown in the table below:

REGIONS OF ADVENTURE TOURISM IN LEBANON

Governorate	District	Towns	Activities
North	Aakkar	High Mountains (AL Jord)	Hiking, Trekking, Mountain biking, Camping
	Bsharry	Bsharry (Cedars area)	Hiking, Skiing, Snowshoeing, Nordic Skiing, Paragliding, Hot air Balloon, Mountain biking
		Qadisha Valley	Hiking, Trekking, caving
	Zghorta	Ehden and its nature reserve	Hiking, Rope courses, Mountain climbing, Archery
	Batroun	Tannourine and its nature reserve	Hiking, Trekking, Snowshoeing, Nordic Skiing, Mountain Biking, Caving, Mountain climbing
		Batroun	Snorkeling, Sea Kayaking, Cycling
Mount Lebanon	Jbeil	Ehmej	Hiking, Trekking, Rope activities, Archery
		Lalouq	Hiking, Trekking, skiing, Nordic skiing, Snowshoeing, Cycling, Mountain biking, mountain climbing
		Aaqoura	Hiking, Trekking, Nordic skiing, Snowshoeing, Caving, Mountain climbing
		Afqa	Hiking Trekking, Caving, Rope course, Archery, Mountain climbing, Horse riding,
	Keserouane	Kfardebiane and Wady es-Salib	Hiking, Skiing, Snowshoeing, Nordic skiing, Mountain biking, Rope Course, Caving, Mountain climbing
		Chahtoul and Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve	Hiking, Rope course, archery, Camping
	Maten	Baskinta	Hiking, Trekking, Mountain biking,
		Zaarour	Hiking, Trekking, Nordic Skiing, Snowshoeing, Cycling, Mountain biking
		Arsoun (Arsoun Village Adventure Park)	Hiking, Rope course,
	Baabda	Hammana	Hiking, Trekking, Canyoning, Mountain biking
	Aaley	Ramliyyeh	Hiking, Rope Courses, Camping
	Shouf	Aain Zhalta And Shouf Biosphere Reserve	Horseback riding, Hiking, Trekking Mountain Biking, Camping,

Governorate	District	Towns	Activities
South	Jezzine	Bkessine	Hiking, Trekking, Rope Course, Archery,
	Tyre	Tyre city and Nature Reserve	Snorkeling, Cycling, Sea Turtles watch
	Hasbayya	Rashayya el Wady	Hiking, Trekking, Nordic skiing, Snowshoeing
		Chebaa	Hiking, Trekking, Snowsheoing, Nordic Skiing, Mule back riding, Rope course
		El-Khardaly	River Kayaking, Camping
Beqaa	West Beqaa	Aammiq and its Protected Area	Hiking, cycling, Marches animal watch and Bird watching
	Zahleh	Taanayel	Cycling
		Aanjar and KfarZabad	Hiking, Cycling, Marches animal watch and bird watching
	North Beqaa	Hermel	Rafting, Camping

4.2 Destination management system

According to ATTA, "Adventure tourism is a tourist activity that includes physical activity, a cultural exchange, or activities in nature". In the same time adventure tourism is very popular among young generations who need to experience different levels of self-testing, a bit of risk-taking and a lot of personal challenging.

Tourism can contribute to achieve most of the 2030 Agenda Sustainable Development Goals if well planned and implemented. It is mainly referenced directly in SDGs 4, 8 and 12.
 SDG 4: Life Below Water
 SDG 8: Decent Work and Employment
 SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

It is difficult to achieve the sustainability of tourism without implementing the triple bottom line of sustainable development that relies on a) protecting

the environment, b) safeguarding cultural heritage and c) supporting economic equity, all powered by solid management approach.

In Lebanon the majority of the adventure tourism destinations don't have any sustainable development base.

Rafting on the Orontes River in Hermel is practiced without any regulations to protect the river environment.

Visiting the Baatara pothole in Tannourine area is no more an exciting experience due to all the infrastructure and equipment (metal cables, stairs, kiosks, toilets, restaurants, etc) that has been installed lately by the association that runs and manages the "National Natural Site".

Climbing the Mount Hermon in Rashaya el-Wady has lost its wild aspect due to herds of hikers encouraged to visit the mountain by the municipal board. Hills of litter are generated in parallel to noise pollution and 4x4 invasions.

The remaining places where high levels of protection are reached are in the Nature Reserves. All of them have founded groups of volunteers to help in critical seasonal periods.

In the Shouf Biosphere Reserve, efforts are being made to distribute visitors' influxes on different entrances²⁵ in an attempt to reduce congestions at el-Barouk entrance in summer peak time.

In Bentaël Nature Reserve, the team is trying to find new adapted activities to the school groups, trying to engage them and educate them to environment protection via educational and fun activities.

In Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve they are trying to diversify the trails network to allow the visitor different experiences with breath taking panoramas, and in the same time they are trying to connect with the surrounding villages in the buffer zone to develop new experiential activities, for example with Chahtoul Camping facility where the visitor as allowed to spend quality time in the wilderness without harming nature.

On the other side the trendy nature-based tourism activities have encouraged investments to flourish in the areas surrounding the nature reserves, in the wilderness and in the villages. But this interesting development is not being accompanied by any development management of the sector, and many newcomers are witnessing difficulties for

different reasons, such as misbalance between demand and supply, or wrong location, or lack in hospitality skills, or unjustified high prices, etc.

Other management bodies are found in the destinations listed above but the efforts are still weak.

The protected pine forest of Bkessine in Jezzine area is witnessing huge amounts of litter due to summer visitors and hikers who are using the forest without local guides or any control. In parallel La Maison de la Forêt facility adventure park is installed inside the pine forest and producing noise pollution and waste water pollution, not to mention its high price range, which is not accessible to modest economies.

It is important to note that the Bkessine pine forest is a private property forest and classified under economic protected forest category due to its pine kernel grains production which supports economically a large number of people in the area.

In Kfardebiane area the municipality who manages tourism activity is allowing climbing activity on the unique Natural National Heritage Monument, the Natural Rock Bridge of Nabaa el Laban, ignoring the classification of the site for the sake of enjoyment of the activity. They don't even have a carrying capacity or an EIA study of the site.

In Menjez the municipality has installed agreements with different bodies, among which respected universities, to implement

25. In the Shouf Biosphere Reserve there are 5 entrances.

rigorous development and management plans to its natural surrounding area. They have increased the forest area by planting new native species of trees such as Carob trees and Oak trees and in parallel they have safeguarded their cultural heritage by asking permission to the ministry of culture to refurbish with experts, the archeological sites. This has added flavor to the adventure experience that a visitor witnesses while hiking in the area.

4.3 Lebanon's tourism strategy

Since 1991, after the end of its civil war, Lebanon has witnessed many ups and downs in terms of safety and security, without reaching a real period of stability and economic prosperity. During this phase and despite all the difficulties a new type of tourism emerged in Lebanon rural areas and nature spaces, different than the traditional 'land-marks-visits' and night life. But this trendy type of tourism has not been accompanied by the government; it was the work of the private sector, without any rules and regulations and deprived of any strategy. The types of activities were: Hiking and Trekking, Paragliding, Mountain Climbing, Rope Courses and Caving, Kayaking and Rafting, Snowshoeing, Nordic Skiing and Snow Camping, Cycling and Mountain Biking, 4x4 Quads, Archery, etc. And among the types of tourism that emerged, there was ecotourism, rural tourism, nature tourism, discovery tourism and adventure tourism, but without really a clear definition to each type.

So far any strategy has been planned on behalf of the ministry of tourism, and yes, we are all able to understand the effects on the sector translated in multiple accidents, insurance problems, disparity in levels of skills & knowledge, weakness in activities implementation, fluctuating prices and delusive rights & duties.

Naturally, absence of strategy means lack in market study, targeted market and appropriate promotion. Tentative and sporadic marketing was practiced by private sector on individual basis, for domestic market (Sunday trips) and inbound market (long weekend packages and one week long packages).

In the same time very few activity organizers are legal entity, and none of them are licensed by the ministry of tourism, but few tour operators have made a difference taking this subsector of tourism in Lebanon to a higher level of professionalism and put their own standards producing limited plans without any substantial support from the government.

In parallel many development projects tackled the lacks and addressed the problems by pushing towards a more organized sector but resulted in non-implemented strategies such as the MOT / JICA National Tourism Strategy in 2004 and the LIVCD / USAID funded Rural Tourism Strategy in 2015, among many other plans and strategies that were kept in drawers without any implementation, because of the lack of a national strategy for tourism.

For all the above Lebanon is not an adventure tourism destination yet, but it has a huge potential to become one.

4.4 Sustainable Tourism policies

The only policy existing in the adventure tourism sector in Lebanon is proposed and partially implemented by the few Eco-Tour Operators²⁶ who are among the pioneers of these types of tourism in the country, and followed by another little group of associations²⁷. They have developed for the Ministry of Environment a National Strategy for Ecotourism, and for

the ministry of tourism a National Charter of Responsible Tourism; both studies are neglected by the government.

In parallel no marketing policies exist neither for the adventure tourism sector in Lebanon. Each eco-Tour Operator promotes his own activities and packages by his own channels and means.

DMO STATUS ANALYSIS IN SELECTED DESTINATIONS

Governorate	Area / Town	DMO analysis
North	Akkar / Menjez	The municipality of Menjez is doing the: Planning, Product development, Implementation, Regulations, Marketing and Promotion, Management. But it covers only the village of Menjez. Considering it a DMO needs coordination with other municipalities in the neighboring areas and unified efforts. Qbayyet is a candidate.
	Akkar / Qbayyet area	In Qbayyet it is individual effort. Same as above it needs group efforts to become a DMO.
	Bsharry / Qadisha Valley	Qadisha Valley is a UNESCO Cultural Landscape site. But the leading association is weak and the management results are disastrous. DMO is absent from the area of Bsharry – Qadisha – Cedars.
	Zghorta / Ehden	The municipality of Zghorta-Ehden is doing a good job towards DMO status, but it needs to deploy more efforts in the following areas: product development and marketing. They have an ongoing plan for a Sustainable Tourism strategy.
	Batroun / Tannourine	No DMO here as Tannourine Cedars Nature Reserve is struggling alone to try to bring tourists to the region. Big lack at all levels: Planning, Product development, Implementation, Regulations, Marketing and Promotion, Management.

26. Liban Trek; Lebanese Adventure; 33 North; Ibex Ecotourism; Responsible Mobilities

27. LMTA; AEC

Governorate	Area / Town	DMO analysis
North Beqaa	Hermel / Orontes river	The rafting activity imposed itself in Orontes river. People come here because it is the only place for rafting in Lebanon. Suppliers here need to do a better job at the level of quality and management.
Mount Lebanon	Keserouane / Kfardebiane	In Kfardebiane, the municipality is doing a lot of efforts to play the role of a DMO. But they have a lack in the vision, and the management of the activities, especially those related to nature protection.
	Keserouane / Jabal Moussa / Biosphere Reserve	No DMO here. Jabal Moussa Biosphere Reserve has good management concerning the activities taking place in the protected area. Lower level of management quality when it comes to coordination with the villages.
	Jbeil / Bentael / Nature Reserve	Bentael nature reserve is small and has no impact on the neighboring villages. The management team has to do efforts on product development to attract more visitors and engage the local communities.
	Shouf / Shouf Cedars Biosphere Reserve	The SBR is the most capable organization to play the role of a DMO in Lebanon. They have strong relationship with the villages' key persons and the nature reserve covers a huge area that belongs to many villages around it. In addition to that they have developed a strong ecotourism product that is based on nature conservation from one side and culture safeguard from the other side. All is needed in the case of the Shouf region is to match together under one canopy the different types of tourism: traditional cultural landmarks tourism and ecotourism.
South	Jezzine / Jezzine	In Jezzine they are very close to the DMO status since it is the federation of municipalities who plays the role. But they need to find ways to include more villages under product development and marketing areas.

4.4.1 Legal Framework affecting adventure tourism activities in specific PAs

Unfortunately there is no legal framework for adventure tourism in Lebanon. And the responsibility is divided on three major ministries:

- The ministry of Youth and Sports: lack in regulations concerning sports nature based activities. And it is important to mention here that a group of adventurers has founded last year in

2019 the LMCF, with the objective of organizing the sector.

- The ministry of Tourism: at MOT there is lack in regulations concerning the tour operators who are able to operate such activities in nature. In parallel, it is worth mentioning that a huge number of tour organizers (approximately 120) propose nature based activities; but the huge majority of these groups are not legal and have lack in level of professionalism. This leads to problems such as accidents, insurance non-

coverage, fluctuating prices, excessive use of natural resources, littering, low level of culture, resulting in bad reputation of the sub-sector. In an attempt to put some order in the sector, a small number of 5 eco-tour Operators have decided to join efforts and found a Union of Sustainable and Ecotourism Institutions of Lebanon (USEIL). The plan is to lobby towards more sustainable practice of tourism especially nature-based tourism.

- Ministry of Environment: Nature Reserves and Protected Areas refer to the MOE concerning environment protection and conservation. And normally entrance to NRs and PAs are free. But Ecotourism is accepted as a income generating activity and entrance fee in this case is considered a contribution from the visitor to the efforts of conservation. But effectively there is a lack in regulating ecotourism in Lebanon and there is a huge mis-understanding to its essence and nature; in the same time people are confused between the activity itself and the attitude of ecotourism, since activities that one can do in the protected areas and outside the protected areas, are nearly the same, so for the consumer ecotourism is everywhere in nature, even if there is no control over the activities.
- Carrying capacity: Nature reserves and protected areas in Lebanon do not use Carrying capacity evaluation techniques. Activities are conducted with no scientific references, which make the situation worst.

4.4.2 Union of Sustainable and Ecotourism Institutions in Lebanon

The private sector, USEIL members have worked closely with ministries and municipalities to develop regulations. The results were weak because the National Charter of Responsible Tourism was developed back in 2008 but has never been implemented.

Another attempt to regulate the sector took place in 2013 with the National Strategy for Ecotourism in Lebanon: Same fate.

Many Sustainable Tourism project funded by different donors have tackled this issue but the results were shy and the sector remains deprived of any regulation or law.

Today USEIL is proposing a clear program to find solutions for this problem and has high hopes as a new minister has taken the lead of MOT showing some interest in the sector. USEIL's objectives are found in the Annex A.

Other associations such as the LMTA have developed standards for environment protection and economic support at local level. MOUs are established with different municipalities to advocate towards trail protection in addition to natural and cultural heritage preservation.

Annex B – USEIL’s objectives

- **Communicate with different ministries, organisms, associations and institutions to build understanding and agreements bridges for the interest of the sector and Lebanon; and coordinate with the Tourism industry and specialized ministries on the following:**
- Contribute to the organization of the Sustainable Tourism sector in Lebanon.
- Produce a comprehensive National Strategy for Sustainable Tourism and especially its Responsible and Ecotourism parts.
- Work on the adoption of the Charter of Responsible Tourism that has been developed back in 2007.
- Contribute to the modernization of laws and regulations of Eco-Tour Operators in Lebanon.
- Defend the interests and rights of the owners and workers in those institutions.
- Find supporting ways to the institutions and service providers in rural areas.
- Develop and complete the regulations of the job of “Mountain guide” in coordination with the existing Syndicate of Tourist Guides of Lebanon.
- And within the above potential understanding, found a vocational training academy and program for local guides and service providers in rural areas.
- Install a database for tourism statistics in rural areas in full coordination with the department of statistics at the ministry of tourism.
- Set a Quality Label program for ecotourism services.
- Organize sustainable and ecotourism conferences and events.
- Promote sustainable and ecotourism in different local and international fairs and conferences.

ACRONYMS

AEC	Arc En Ciel
ATTA	Adventure Travel and Trade Association
AUB	American University of Beirut
BLT	Baskinta Literary Trail
CAS	Central Administration of Statistics
DHIAFEE	Developing the Hospitality Industry's Abilities – Fostering Economic Expansion
DMO	Destination Management Organization
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LIVCD	Lebanon Industry Value Chain Development
LMCF	Lebanon Mountain Climbing Federation
LMT	Lebanon Mountain Trail
LMTA	Lebanon Mountain Trail Association
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MOT	Ministry of Tourism in Lebanon
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NR	Nature Reserve
PA	Protected Area
SBR	Shouf Biosphere Reserve
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPNL	Society for the Protection of Nature in Lebanon
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USEIL	Union of Sustainable and Ecotourism Institutions of Lebanon
USJ	Universite Saint Joseph de Beyrouth
WB	World Bank