

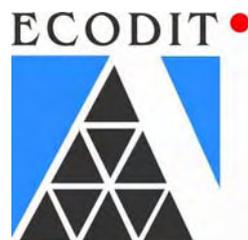


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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR THE MUDEIREJ BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION

SCOPING STATEMENT - FINAL

Prepared by:



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BEIRUT, LEBANON

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<i>CDR</i>	Council for Development and Reconstruction
<i>EA</i>	Environmental Assessment
<i>GOL</i>	Government of Lebanon
<i>IEE</i>	Initial Environmental Examination
<i>MOE</i>	Ministry of Environment
<i>RFQ</i>	Request for Quotations
<i>TO</i>	Task Order
<i>USAID</i>	US Agency for International Development

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The United States Government, through the US Agency for International Development (USAID), has offered to undertake the complete reconstruction of the Mudeirej Bridge (called “the Project”) in coordination with the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR). USAID awarded the construction contract to Contrack International (a major US Construction Contractor) and conducted an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) of the project.

Pursuant to the IEE findings, the Project requires a *focused* Environmental Assessment (EA) to identify and mitigate potential adverse impacts on the environment of the repair and reconstruction of the Mudeirej Bridge. USAID chose ECODIT Liban to conduct this focused EA following a Request for Quotation (FFQ) issued in early 2007. ECODIT Liban received the Task Order (TO) on June 7 and held an Entrance Interview with the USAID mission in Lebanon on June 13. The performance period for this TO is 60 days from the date of the Entrance Interview.

1.2 Project description

The Mudeirej Bridge at a glance

The Mudeirej Bridge is the highest bridge in Lebanon and the Middle East. Located in Hammana, the Mudeirej Bridge was built in 1998 by Italian design and construction contractors, using pre-stress concrete design. The bridge complex is made up of two double-lane twin bridges; the north bridge connects Chtoura to Beirut and the south bridge connects Beirut to Chtoura. Each bridge is 420 m long (measured from abutments at both ends of the bridge), rests on 10 piers and consists of 11 spans. Pier height ranges from 3 meters (near the abutment) to 72 meters at the center. The Mudeirej Bridge is considered a vital artery for international land transport but can be bypassed using the old road through Sofar.

Scale of damage and repair works

The bridge sustained direct hits by aerial bombardment during the July 2006 war in Lebanon resulting in the following damages:

- **North Bridge:** one span and two supporting piers were partially destroyed forcing the total closure of the bridge. The damaged span is punctured by a hole measuring about 5 meters across. The blast also damaged the safety fences.
- **South Bridge:** more than half of the bridge collapsed into the valley (about 200 meters) including 5 piers and 6 spans. Because the bridge was built using press-stress concrete, the remaining piers (on the north side of the bridge) have skewed up to 1.2 meters from their original axis. The remaining portion of the bridge (about 200 meters) cannot be salvaged and must be removed.

The USAID Reconstruction Team is overseeing the reconstruction project and awarded on January 31, 2007 US contractor **Contrack International** to design and rebuild the Mudeirej Bridge. In Lebanon, Contrack is working with **Khatib & Alami** (for design works), Lebanese contractor **MAN** and Egyptian contractor **Arab Contractors**. HNTB is providing design supervision and Baker is providing overall project management. The Lebanese counterpart agency is the **Council for Development and Reconstruction** and **Socotec** is providing technical supervision for CDR.

The bombardment did not affect the bridge foundations. Immediately after the cease fire in August 2006, the Council for Development and Reconstruction built a ramp to bypass the south bridge directing vehicles off the highway, under the north bridge, and onto the old Damascus Road. Traffic on the north bridge was rerouted to the old Damascus Road and therefore did not require building a ramp.

Reconstruction

The USAID Reconstruction Team and Contract International (see box) will **repair** the North Bridge and **rebuild** the South Bridge. The North Bridge will be fully repaired and reopened for traffic (two lanes in opposite directions) while reconstruction of the South Bridge continues. The contractor has explored several options for repairing the North Bridge including fiber-wrapping the damaged piers. The estimated project duration is 24 months.

The USAID Reconstruction Team also requested the contractor to prepare a South Bridge demolition plan that would examine two options; jackhammer drilling and blasting. Blasting appears to offer several advantages over drilling including:

- Expediency (can be completed in a couple of weeks)
- Safety (blasting will put workers out of harm's way)
- Shorter period of traffic disruption

Blasting will not affect the existing underground foundations (or the plinths above them); the foundations will be reused to anchor new piers and restore the original bridge alignment. The estimated completion date for the South Bridge is May 2009. At the end of all repair and reconstruction works, the Mudeirej Bridge will look exactly like it did before the bombardment.

1.3 Purpose of Scoping Statement

This scoping statement provides detailed terms of references for the EA study; it outlines the positive and potential adverse impacts of the USAID project "Reconstruction of the Mudeirej Bridge", differentiates significant from less significant impacts, and presents a proposed outline of the final EIA report as well our methodology and the assessment team.

1.4 Methodology

In preparing this Scoping Statement, ECODIT:

1. Met with the USAID mission in Lebanon (Entrance Interview) on June 13 to go over the scope of work and timetable for the EA; at that meeting, ECODIT received from USAID contact information for key design and construction contractors;
2. Visited the project site (Mudeirej) and met with key project staff including Mr. Essam Guirguis (Team Leader for USAID) and Mr. Said Torbey (Quality Control Manager, at Contract International);
3. Consulted other stakeholders including Mr. Elie El Helou (government focal point at the Council for Development and Reconstruction) and Mr. Ramiz Chayya (the mayor of Sofar); and
4. Conducted a scoping session in Sofar on July 6 (see minutes in Appendix A).

2. SCOPING ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The Project is expected to generate a number of positive and adverse impacts. In principle, the positive impacts should outweigh the project's potential adverse impacts; the environmental assessment will address the adverse impacts and identify ways to mitigate them or limit their significance.

2.1 Positive impacts

Rebuilding the Mudeirej Bridge will have significant positive impacts for the area and Lebanon in general. In particular, the Project will:

- Restore the bridge and redeem its title as the "*Tallest bridge in the Middle East*"
- Reduce travel time from Beirut to Chtoura
- Reduce the number of road accidents on the Sofar-Mudeirej highway
- Create jobs and economic activities during reconstruction
- Restore the landscape to its original state (prior to the war)

2.2 Potential adverse impacts during demolition

There are two options for demolishing the south bridge (as well as the damaged span on the north bridge):

1. Blasting
2. Jack hammering

The potential adverse impacts of demolition activities on the environment include:

- Physical damage to the (Ain Dara) road that passes beneath the bridge
- Physical damage to electricity poles beneath the bridge (low tension)
- Noise pollution
- Dust from demolition *and* hauling the demolition waste offsite
- Occupational accidents
- Disruption of natural groundwater regime
- Additional landslides
- Demolition waste

A comparative analysis of these impacts for each demolition option is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Comparative Analysis of Impacts between two Demolition Techniques

<i>Parameter</i>	<i>Jack-hammering</i>	<i>Blasting (implosion)</i>
Duration	Requires at least 6 months	Requires about 2 months
Noise	Moderate but long-term	High but only during blasting (<1mn)
Dust	Minor but over 6 months	High, smoke plume, very short-term
Road damage	Yes, will need speedy repair	
Groundwater	Minor, depends on management plan for demolition waste	
Occupational	High/prolonged risk of accidents	Low and only during blasting
Health & safety	Moderate because of longer duration	Minor because blasting is short-term
Demolition waste	Same volumes of demolition waste, will need disposal offsite	

2.3 Potential adverse impacts related to demolition waste

Clearly, the reckless disposal of the demolition waste would seriously degrade the environment and the landscape. It is important to note that much of the south bridge that collapsed during the war (see photos) had already been hauled offsite by a local contractor before the USAID Project began, and with the approval of the Council of Ministers. Although there are no large-scale smelters in Lebanon, neighboring markets (Syria and Egypt) absorb all the scrap metal and steel that Lebanon generates. The reuse of rubble however is less prominent. There are no rubble recycling plants in Lebanon. An alternative option for the disposal of rubble in Lebanon is quarry reclamation. Incidentally, some of Lebanon's largest quarries are located in Ain Dara, only a few kilometers from the Mudeirej Bridge.



Photo 1: Rubble from collapsed south bridge (fall 2006) Photo 2: Construction works (spring 2007)

2.4 Potential adverse impacts during construction

The potential adverse impacts during reconstruction include:

- Noise pollution (trucks, construction activities)
- Air quality deterioration (dust, on-site power generators)
- Occupational accidents (workers)
- Pressure on natural resources if the source of aggregates is not controlled
- Intensive flow of trucks to/from the site
- Impact of trucks on street shops along old Damascus Road
- Localized traffic and road diversions
- Construction waste
- Wastewater from project headquarter (located on site)
- Handling of hazardous waste

It is important to note that Lebanon has a poor environmental performance record in the quarry and transport sectors. The Government of Lebanon has not been able to implement a national quarry plan or crack down on illegal quarrying that continue to operate all over the country. Trucks also constitute a public hazard especially on mountain roads; all too often trucks exceed their load capacity as well as speed limits. Controlling the flow of trucks to and from the Project site as well as the source of aggregates will be paramount to the success and image of the Project.

The Council of Ministers published in June 2006 a Circular (19/2006) requiring all government agencies to make sure that public works (including roads and bridges) commissioned by or for the government comply with Decree 8803 (see box).

Box 1: Decree 8803 (4/10/2002) and its amendment 16456 (27/02/2006)

The GOL has designated four quarry sites in the country (to be specified in EA report), and has required that all construction works in the public sector only use aggregates from these (approved) sites. Approval for using aggregates from these sites is granted by the Higher Council for Quarries and Stone Crushers, presided by the Lebanese Ministry of Environment. If aggregates are needed from other sites, then the approval can only be obtained from the Council of Ministers. Although the legislation is clear, in reality, the situation is very different on the ground as most quarries continue to operate with or without licenses (they can obtain administrative extensions even after licenses have expired) and there is very little control over the flow of aggregates in the country.

2.5 Summary of adverse impacts

The adverse impacts are summarized below and categorized based on their significance.

**Table 2
Summary of Adverse Impacts and Their Significance**

<i>Potential Impact</i>	<i>Category</i>	
	Significant	Not Significant
Demolition Phase:		
Physical damage to infrastructure (road and electricity poles)		Moderate
Noise pollution (except blasting)		X
Noise during blasting (very short-term)	X	
Dust from demolition <i>and</i> hauling demolition waste offsite	X	
Occupational accidents	X	
Disruption of natural groundwater regime		X
Additional landslides		X
End disposal of demolition waste	X	
Construction Phase:		
Noise pollution (trucks, construction activities)		X
Air quality deterioration (dust, on-site power generators)		X
Occupational accidents	X	
Pressure on natural resources (construction aggregates)	X	
Incremental impact of trucks on street shops in Sofar		X
Localized traffic due to road diversions		X
Construction waste	X	
Wastewater from project headquarter (located on site)		X
Handling of hazardous waste (for construction activities)		X

3. PROJECT ALTERNATIVES

There is no alternative per se to the Mudeirej Bridge Reconstruction Project. The bridge was originally built in 1998 and was extensively damaged during the war in 2006. Most of the North Bridge can and will be salvaged (as described in the Project Description, Section 1.2) whereas the South Bridge will need to be demolished and rebuilt. Building a new bridge altogether (north and south) in a different location is not an option. The Project however faces several alternatives on at least two fronts:

1. Demolition (see analysis of alternatives in Section 2.2)
2. Removal and disposal of demolition waste (see proposals in Section 2.3).

4. PROPOSED EA OUTLINE

Based on the impacts identified in Chapter 2, we have prepared a detailed outline of the EIA report - *see Appendix B*. The proposed outline is a hybrid between USAID regulation CFR 216 and the Government of Lebanon draft EIA decree. To streamline the report outline, we have merged or grouped some of the chapters listed in the USAID and/or GOL guidelines. For example, we have included environmental monitoring and training requirement under the environmental management plan.

5. EA METHODOLOGY AND ASSESSMENT TEAM

5.1 Proposed methodology

We propose a simple but effective methodology to conduct the EA comprised of the following major tasks:

- Conduct scoping session: held last July 6, 2007 (see Scoping Session report in Appendix A), the aim of this scoping session was to solicit feedback and comments from key stakeholders regarding potential project impacts and gauge their concerns.
- Conduct field visits & collect data: the project team visited the site in Sofar and will collect baseline data on population and economic activities, important recreational and historic areas, topography, hydrogeology, climate, biodiversity (fauna and flora) and ecosystem.
- Submit draft EA to USAID: based on this Scoping Statement, we will produce a draft EA report to USAID for review and comments. ECODIT will also share the draft report with the Lebanese MOE for their review, pursuant to Lebanese EA legislation. *We plan to submit this report by mid August.*
- Submit final EA to USAID: Based on USAID's comments on the draft EA report, we will revise and submit the Final EIA report within 10 days from receiving the comments from USAID.

5.2 Assessment team

ECODIT has mobilized a multi-disciplinary team to conduct the EA and produce the EA report, under the direction of Mr. Karim El-Jisr, the Team Leader on this EA project:

1. Karim El-Jisr
2. Joseph Karam
3. Issam Bou Jaoude
4. Soraya Moukarzel

<i>Specialist</i>	<i>Proposed Position</i>	<i>Degrees</i>	<i>Years of Experience</i>
Karim El-Jisr	EIA Team Leader	MS Environment BS, BE Agriculture	9
Joseph Karam	Quality Control	MS Technology and Policy ME Engineering	20
Issam Bou Jaoude	Hydro-geologist	BS Geology MS Geology MS Hydrogeology	7
Soraya Moukarzel	Research Analyst	MS Agricultural Economics BS/BE Agriculture	2

APPENDIX A MINUTES OF SCOPING SESSION (JULY 6)

ECODIT organized on July 6 a scoping session for the Mudeirej Bridge Reconstruction project. The scoping session was hosted by the municipality of Sofar, one of five municipalities located near the Mudeirej Bridge. In total, 22 participants attended the scoping session (excluding ECODIT) which was followed by a visit to the site.

The program was as follows:

10:00	Arrival
10:10 – 10:15	Opening remarks (USAID Lebanon)
10:15 – 10:30	Introductions and EA purpose (ECODIT)
10:30 – 10:45	Project Description (USAID Reconstruction Team)
10:45 – 11:00	Questions & Answers regarding the Project
11:00 – 11:15	Coffee Break
11:15 – 11:45	Presentation on key environmental issues (ECODIT)
11:45 – 12:30	Open discussion regarding potential environmental impacts (facilitated by ECODIT)
12:45	Site Visit (tour provided by Contrack International)

Arrival, welcome and project description:

Mr. Ramez Chayya, the Mayor of Sofar, welcomed the participants and Ms. Sana Saliba, Program Development Specialist at USAID, gave a brief overview of the project background and the reconstruction team. She then explained that USAID was committed to purchasing up to 70% of the material used for reconstruction locally (from Lebanon). The Director of ECODIT, Mr. Karim El-Jisr, then presented the objectives of the scoping session and Mr. Essam Guirguis, Team Leader for the USAID Reconstruction Team, presented the project that will result in the total repair and reconstruction of the bridge by 2009.

Environmental impacts:

After a presentation of the project's potential impacts, the participants raised important questions and made pertinent comments, summarized next:

1. General Comments

- The project could affect groundwater by disrupting natural water infiltration and/or pollute underground water reservoirs. The EA should study the geology (and soil type in the area) and determine the location of nearby springs.
- Several municipalities (incl. Hammana and Chbaniyeh) commented on the impact of the original bridge (and associated highway) on nearby lands on both sides of the highway (the highway from Sofar to Mudeirej across the Mudeirej Bridge has no service roads or exits). Many local residents lost their lands (or were not duly compensated) at the time of building the highway and bridge.
- The municipality of Sofar complained about the temporary steel bridge that was erected after the war on the damaged Sofar Bridge (located about 2 km north of the Mudeirej Bridge). The

Sofar Bridge will be repaired using an Italian grant. The temporary bridge is causing severe noise pollution and will, according to Mr. Elie El Helou, be retrofitted with rubber sheets to minimize noise.

- Several municipalities also suggested to plant trees along both sides of the highway to minimize dust and noise. Elie El Helou of CDR invited these municipalities to visit the Council to discuss proposed amendments to the Tender Documents for the Sofar highway (prior to tendering).

While pertinent, the comments related to the Sofar steel bridge and highway fall outside the scope of the Mudeirej Bridge Reconstruction Project and related EA.

2. Anticipated positive impacts

The Mudeirej Bridge Reconstruction Project will:

- Restore the bridge and redeem its title as the *Highest bridge in the Middle East*
- Reduce travel time
- Reduce the number of road accidents
- Create jobs and economic activities during reconstruction

3. Potential adverse impacts

During *demolition*, the Mudeirej Bridge Reconstruction Project may:

- Generate a lot of demolition waste and rubble; reckless disposal would seriously degrade the environment and the landscape. Consider hauling the rubble to inactive quarries and use them to rehabilitate the sites (e.g., Ain Dara)
- Release a lot of dust (and a plume of smoke during blasting)
- Cause additional landslides (especially during blasting)

It was agreed that blasting offered several advantages over jack-hammering (namely speed) and that *implosion* (currently considered by CDR and the design contractors) is less intrusive than *explosion* and probably more effective and safer.

During *reconstruction*, the Mudeirej Bridge Reconstruction Project may:

- Cause noise pollution, traffic jams and air quality deterioration (due to dust)
- Lead to occupational accidents
- Increase pressure on natural resources if the source of aggregates is not controlled
- Affect roadside commerce in/around Sofar
- Require road diversions.

The participants made the following recommendations:

- Hire local workers (skilled and unskilled)
- Communicate the time of blasting in advance
- Make sure that local springs are not affected by the project
- Monitor and regulate the flow of trucks to/from the site (carrying construction materials and demolition waste)
- Verify the source of aggregates to minimize pressure on local resources (for example, by using a ticketing system to certify the origin of the aggregates)

List of Participants: Scoping Session (July 6)

	Name		Organization	Phone number	Fax Number	e- mail
1	Hisham Shayya	Treasurer	Federation of Jurd el A3la Municipalities - Bhamdoun	03- 404 523		hishamshayya@hotmail.com
2	Walid Abi Hanna	رائد	The Lebanese Army	03- 272 734		lebwalid@hotmail.com
3	Essam Guirguis	Team Leader	USAID Reconstruction Team	03- 482 619		essam-guirguis@lebowa.net
4	Mohammed Gouda	Safety Inspector	Contract International	03- 493 747		mgouda@CONTRACK.com
5	Pierre Hayek	عقيد	General Directorate for Internal Security Forces	01- 301 687		
6	Sana Saliba	Program Development Specialist	USAID Lebanon	04- 453 600		salibasg@state.gov
7	Rami Wehbeh	Engineer	USAID Lebanon	03- 033 550		
8	Said Torbey	Quality Control Manager	Contract	70- 161 217		
9	Ghassan Ghosn	Local Representative	Contract	70- 161 213		
10	X Romanos		Contract	70- 168 609		
11	Bassem Assaf		Contract	03- 194 127		bassaf@contract.com
12	Dany Absy		SOCOTEC Liban	03- 732 241	01-218310	socotec@cyberia.net.lb
13	Mahmoud Ahmadieh	President	Tabi3a Bala Houdoud (NGO)	03- 830 860	05- 551080	ahmadieh@cyberia.net.lb
14	Habib Rizk	Mayor	Hammana Municipality	03- 663 477	05- 530109	
15	Emile Moussa	Council Member	Chbanieh Municipality	03- 570 095		
16	Ghanem Raad	Mayor	Chbanieh Municipality	03- 307 635		
17	Walid Sleiman	Council Member	Chbanieh Municipality	03- 665 649	05- 370763	
18	Boutrous Raad	Council Member	Chbanieh Municipality	03- 863 533	05- 370401	
19	Ramez Chayya	Mayor	Sofar Municipality			
20	Nassif El Ahmadieh	Council Member	Sofar Municipality	03- 861 706		
21	Elie El Helou	Head of Roads Department	Council of Development and Reconstruction	01- 981 431	01- 981252	
22	Zouhair Zeineddine	Mayor	Municipality of yyy	03- 302 387		
23	Karim El-Jisr	Director	ECODIT Liban	01 566 784	01 566 785	kjisr@ecodit.com
24	Souraya Moukarzel	Research Analyst	ECODIT Liban	01 566 784	01 566 785	smoukarzel@ecodit.com
25	Issam Bou Jaoude	Hydro-geologist	ECODIT Liban (Consultant)	01 566 784	01 566 785	

APPENDIX B TENTATIVE EA OUTLINE

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* ECODIT will not assess the environmental impacts during operation of the bridge, as those impacts (if any) already existed before the Project.