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Italian Cooperation - Lebanon Case Study

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In Lebanon, responsibility for waste management is assigned to municipalities. However, lack of funds, weak technical know-how, total absence of sanitary landfills and a weak tax system have caused most municipalities to pay only minimal attention to this issue, leading to a widespread environmental problem that will only worsen with time. The ROSS Program of the Italian Cooperation (Italian Embassy) decided to invest in the development of a sound solid waste management strategy in Lebanon and started several initiatives aimed at addressing the SW issue from production to disposal, in collaboration with Italian NGOs COSV, CISP and UCODEP.

The rehabilitation and strengthening of existing Selection-Sorting-Disposal (SSD) Units through provision of specialized equipment will be coupled with a wide "sorting-at-the-source" awareness campaign for the local populations and used as pilot in order to demonstrate that SW has to be sorted and managed as a resource. The thus-sorted waste will then be channeled into the rehabilitated SSD units where the non-organic waste will be further separated in plastic, glass, metal, fabric and batteries, whereas organic waste will be transformed into compost that will be constantly analyzed, monitored and certified.

A key aspect of the strategy is the search for profitability and reduction in management costs so that this improved system may last in time and the municipality will have a genuine interest in maintaining it. Therefore, part of the compost will be used locally while the remaining compost and the recyclables will be sold (through a bidding procedure) to various users and recyclers in Lebanon. Alongside these activities, the Environment Team of the ROSS program conducted a study of the SWM sector in Lebanon. Municipalities had been interviewed and a full market analysis of recyclable had been done. The results are encouraging and confirm the viability of the strategy described above.