

Aqua blues



You have just invested your hard earned money into a luxurious villa overlooking stupendous pine trees and romantic ocean views. You have all the amenities that will keep you warm in the winter and cool in the summer but one thing is missing: water. Daily water deliveries are not something you had envisioned when you made your purchase and it puts a spanner in the works towards living in peace and tranquility. Investing in the **Lebanese real estate market** depends

on the availability of natural resources, especially water.

The good news is that Lebanon is currently developing and implementing a ten-year **water strategy** designed to promote integrated water resources. Key priorities include groundwater legislation and reforming the administrative tariff structures. The Ministry of Energy and Water has taken the lead in the initiative. It faces difficult challenges including inadequate tariff structures, antiquated distribution mechanisms, under-exploitation of natural water resources, and particularly, a lack of **wastewater treatment** facilities to recycle water.

While officials are in agreement of the need to conserve and recycle water, top planners believe priority should be given to building dams and managing water supplies. The lack of funding for these projects represents a significant challenge facing the development of these activities in the future.



Lebanon is not only the land of milk and honey but also of water. The country's **Litani River** (Pic.) is the only river in the **Middle East** that is entirely contained within a single national jurisdiction. The river's watershed covers 2468 km² and is home to more than 300,000 people. The importance of the river has sparked armed conflict between **Lebanon and Israel**. With 17 prime and 23 seasonal rivers, Lebanon is the only **Arab country** whose rivers and water

resources originate from its territories.

Therefore it is becoming a prime target from all surrounding and neighboring countries, as water is a vital and precious commodity worldwide.



The aforementioned projects are long overdue as Lebanon is notorious for wasting its water. The average volume of **rivers** and rain waters can reach 12.5 billion m³, but Lebanon only exploits around 1 billion m³ of rain water. Lebanon should preserve at least 3 billion m³ of its running water through **dam** construction and the creation of artificial **lakes**.

The **Hasbani River** (Pic) in the South has a total volume of 170 million m³ and Lebanon only uses 7 million m³ with the rest flowing out of

its borders and into the sea.

Additionally, the **Lebanese government** should reconsider amending an agreement with **Syria** regarding the **Assi** and **Nahr Al Kabir Al Jounoubi** rivers. Even though the two rivers originate from the Lebanese territories, this agreement entitles Syria to exploit up to 60% of these waters while Lebanon is left with the remaining 40%.

Water resources will be a global issue in the coming decades and countries with excess water capabilities will control those who need it. Lebanon should be aware of the strategic value of its water resources and implement a program to preserve its legal ownership and maximize the use of its **water volumes**. Water is the petrol of the future.

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