

US grants Lebanon \$27.5m to improve water sector

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BEIRUT: The US government and the Lebanese Energy and Water Ministry signed two memoranda of understanding valued at \$27.5 million on Tuesday to provide in-kind assistance and capacity building support for Lebanon's water sector.

With funding made available through the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and in close coordination with the Energy and Water Ministry, the International Resources Group (IRG) will support the Litani River Authority (LRA) and Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI) as they develop Lebanon's four water establishments attain financial and operational sustainability.

The agreement was signed by Energy Minister Jebran Bassil and USAID director in Lebanon Denise A. Herbol.

Under the \$8 million Litani River Basin Management Support program, IRG will provide technical assistance and training, implement limited-scale infrastructure activities, and procure specialized equipment for the LRA. The program will assist the Litani River Authority into transform into a river basin agency.

Under USAID's \$19.5 million Lebanon Water and Wastewater Sector Support program, DAI will improve the management, operations and services of Lebanon's water establishments. The program will introduce new areas of assistance in staff capacity building and capital investment planning; invest in infrastructure and equipment; and work on harmonizing the water establishment's national strategic water.

Speaking at the signing event, Ambassador Sison expressed her appreciation for the efforts of the ministry to improve the water sector in Lebanon. Ambassador Sison said: "It is our sincere belief that the ongoing cooperation between our two countries in developing water management capacity in Lebanon will result in long-term benefits, not only for the Lebanese citizens of today, but for generations of Lebanese to come."