

# **Benchmarking the National Telecom Regulatory Authority Website** **Republic of Lebanon**

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Lara Alawattegama and Chanuka Wattegama

## **1 Introduction**

This is a rejoinder to a study that benchmarked the way NRAs use their websites to improve their regulatory objectives. As the NRA Lebanon decided to launch a new web site, the evaluation of it is done as a separate exercise.

A National Regulatory Authority (NRA) in telecommunication, like any other government organization, uses its website not only to deliver citizen services but also to improve the transparency and effectiveness of its functions. The study evaluated how well NRAs achieve this objective in the eyes of telecom operators, investors, consumers, researchers and the general public. Each website was awarded marks for the availability of information and features that are useful to the regulator's stakeholders. The study did not attempt to create positive or negative images of the respective NRA websites.

LIRNEasia hopes results of the Survey will be a useful for regulators to further improve their websites.

## **2 Methodology**

Four aspects of the NRA sites were studied.

### **1. Factual information and News**

Focuses on information flows that are largely one-way. There are little or no interactive aspects to this component. This area attempts to evaluate the transparency of the NRA through ranking work plans and budgets. Apart from the mentioned, the section comprises of legislation, statistics, annual reports and sector news amongst others. This section carries 40 % of the overall score.

### **2. Business information**

Deals with information and areas that are useful to operators, investors and prospective new entrants. It deals with issues relevant to market entry, interconnection and scarce resources. Importance is given to the provision of online forms and enquiries being followed up on. This section carries 24 % of the overall score.

### **3. General**

Deals with areas that are of general importance to all stakeholders such as white papers, organizational charts, contact details and local language availability. The general section is important because it covers areas that are related to all the sections and therefore need to be easily to access. This section carries 24 % of the overall score.

### **4. Consumer related information**

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Deals with factors that are useful to consumers and includes consumer rights information and complaints processes. This category has a strong emphasis on interactive functions. This section carries 12 % of the overall score.

Within each of these four main categories, there are sub-categories. As the chart below shows each of the sub-categories were allocated a percent of the total score.

**Table 2.1**

	<b>Category</b>	<b>Category weight</b>	<b>Sub-category</b>	<b>Sub-category weight</b>
1	Factual information	40%	Regulatory acts, Laws, Legislation	8%
			Statistical information and sector indicators	8%
			Mission/ Vision Statement and work plan	6%
			Annual reports/ Budgets	6%
			Regulatory manuals	6%
			Organizational chart	2%
			USO Policy information, reports and plans	2%
			Sector news	2%
2	Business information	24%	Market entry details	8%
			Interconnection information	8%
			Scarce resources	8%
3	General	24%	Public consultation/ white papers	10%
			RFPs	5%
			Local language	3%
			Contact details	2%
			Updated information	2%
			Links to local/ international sites	2%
4	Consumer- related information	12%	Consumer and citizen right's information	3%
			Information about public hearings	3%
			Equipment certification	3%
			Complaints process	3 %

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## 2. Results

Figure 2.1: Overall Score

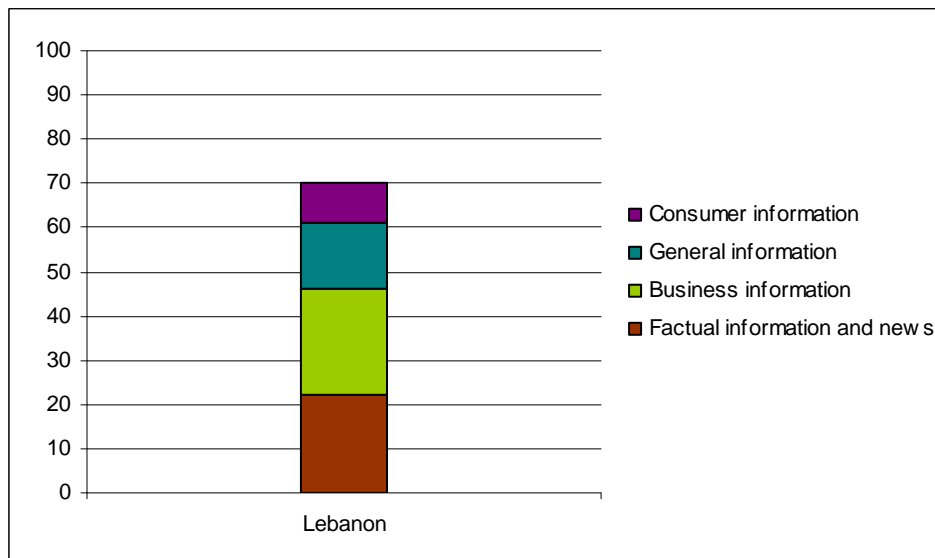
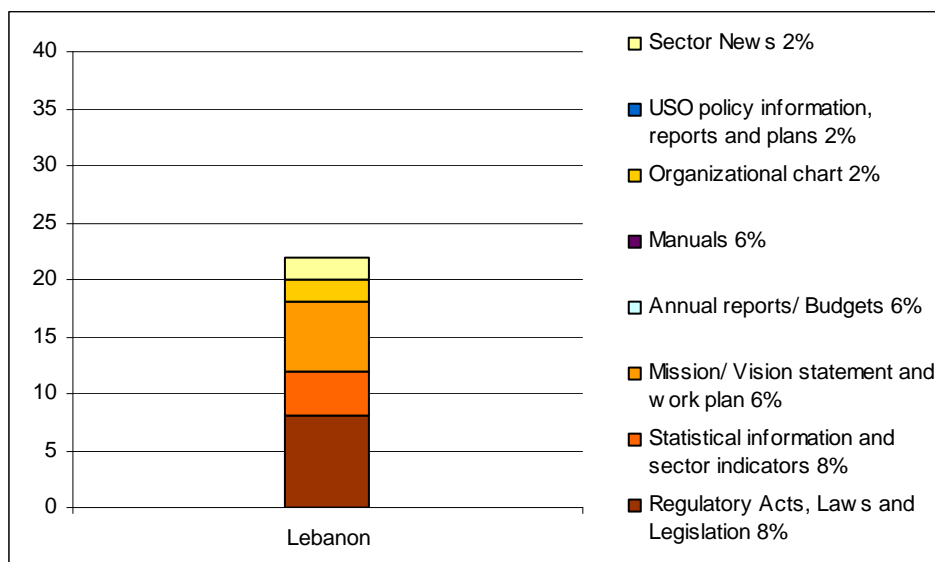


Figure 2.2: Score for Factual information and news



The NRA website scored a total of 22 marks out the total 40 allocated for this section. The website did contain good insight into organizational goals and the strategic plan was comprehensive. There is still

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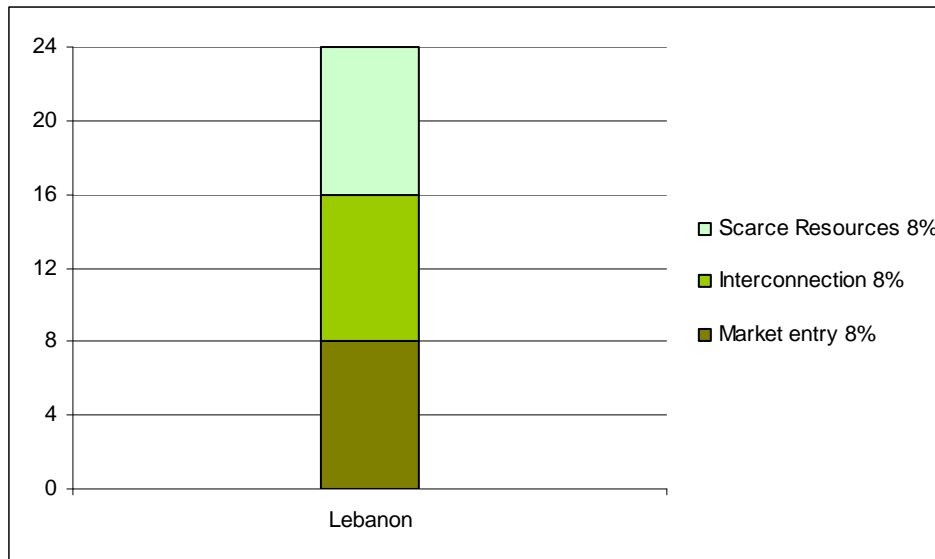


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room for improvement in USO policy information, provision of regulatory manuals, annual report/ budgets (to assess the transparency of the organization). The statistical information and sector indicators section was only awarded 50% of the marks as the website only contained statistics on macroeconomic factors. The site noted that consumer, market reports were conducted but do not make these available. More emphasis on the above noted areas should have yielded a higher score in this section.

**Figure 2.3: Score for Business information**

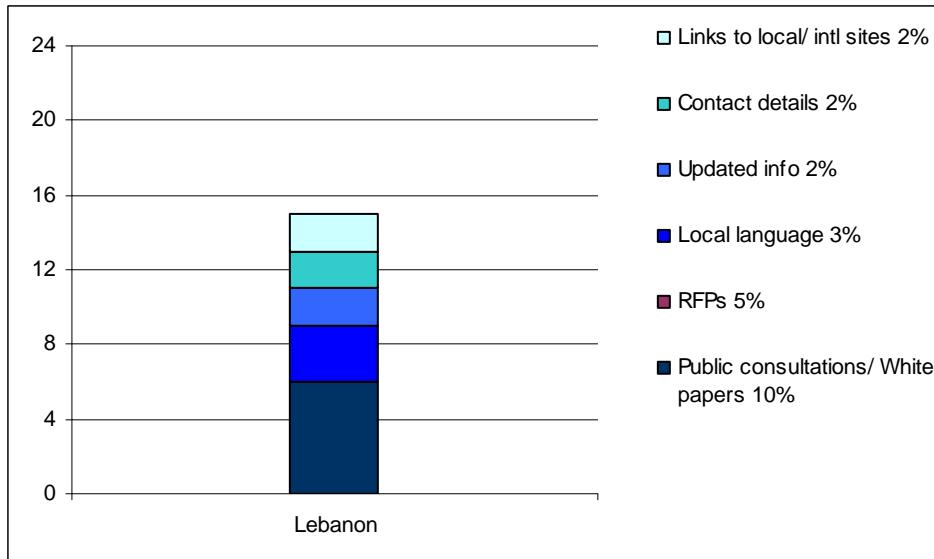


The website scored full marks in this section. There was comprehensive information of all three areas. Scarce resources included details on the numbering plan and the regulation in regard to numbers. Also there is a great detail of information on spectrum. This includes policy and assignment procedures, spectrum monitoring and allocation and the Lebanese National Frequency Allocation table.

Interconnection is dealt with in a comprehensive manner with information on interconnection regulation and Reference Interconnection Offers.

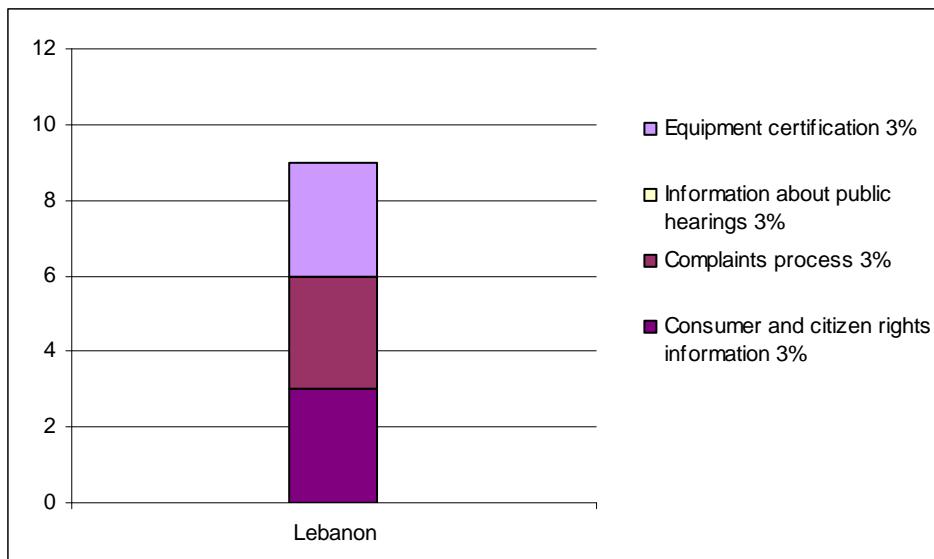
In regard to market entry, licensing information is provided in extensive detail. This includes licensing regulation, the type of licenses available, application forms, fees, licensees and an online application process.

**Figure 2.4: Score for General information**



The general section scored a total of 19/ 24 marks. Though most of the areas in this category were satisfied no information was available for the request for proposals (RFPs) section. Also the public consultations and white papers section was allocated only 60% of the score. The reason for this was that though extensive details were provided on public consultations no white papers were available.

**Figure 2.5: Scores for Consumer related information**



In the consumer information section the website scored a total of 9 marks out of 12. Detailed information was available for areas related to equipment certification, consumer and citizen rights information and the complaints process. However, it failed to provide any information on public hearings.

### 3. Limitations

This website survey attempted to capture as much aspects of the NRA websites as possible, but there can still be limitations with the methodology. This section briefly describes them and also explains how those limitations were addressed.

The weightage of marks awarded for different features has been point of a common criticism. Given there are no concrete rules that govern this, there is a degree of ambiguity about the way in which the weightage should be allocated.

Another difficulty is in the differences in the roles played by the NRAs. Not every one of them performs the same functions. A challenge faced by the researchers was to rate an area which was not within the purview of an NRA. So it was decided to check whether the NRA website presents a link to the agency that specific function and award full marks if so. Therefore some NRA sites could score good marks even if the regulator does not perform certain key functions.

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