

## GOTHAM Consortium visited two of the project's case studies: throwback to Jordan and Lebanon!

After almost two and a half years of project activities and collaboration, the project partners finally had a chance to meet physically and visit two out of the three project case studies. These visits were amazing opportunities for the consortium members to better understand the specific challenges of the Jordanian and Lebanese case studies, as well as to meet the stakeholders and discuss with them specific needs. Throwback below to those two insightful visits!

### Azraq Basin–Zarqa, Jordan

Project partners travelled to Jordan late October 2022 in order to visit Azraq, where the Jordan case study is developed. During the first day, the Consortium meeting took place, which was a great opportunity for discussion and brainstorming around the project's latest advancements and future developments as well as the state of development of the GTool. In addition to the consortium partners physically present (CETAQUA, ICU, NARC, G.A.C. Group), two representatives of the Jordan Ministry of Water and Irrigation also joined the day of the meeting.

On the second day, the group had the opportunity to visit the farm of Dr Osama Al Zyoud. His farm was a great example of innovative and sustainable farming in Azraq, by taking into consideration the groundwater related challenges in the region. After this very interesting visit, the GOTHAM team had the opportunity to see a well and see the way that groundwater levels are monitored.

During the afternoon Dr Luna Al-Hadidi, National Agricultural Research Center (NARC) of Jordan and Project Manager for the Jordan case study gathered around 15 stakeholders: high level representatives

from the Jordan Ministry of Water and Irrigation, local authorities, natural reserves managers, farmers and households from Azraq region. Dr Svetlana Klessova, G.A.C. Group, led an interactive workshop with the aim to better understand the challenges related to groundwater management in Azraq and think together about solutions beyond the use of GTool. While the GTool will be able to provide users with indicators regarding the assessment of groundwater governance, the open question is how the stakeholders intend to cooperate and to address the problematic issues together. The workshop triggered some vivid and insightful discussions among the stakeholders.

In parallel, video interviews were conducted by the project's communication team to create video content for new series called #VoicesOfGOTHAM. This new series will put in the light stakeholders of GOTHAM involved in the co-creation process so they could share their views on the projects, its activities and expected results. [Some videos are already available here.](#)

The day ended with a visit of the Azraq Wetland Reserve, a unique and precious oasis at the heart of the Jordanian eastern desert.



# laat Baalbeck–Hermel, Lebanon


Late November 2022, several consortium partners (CETAQUA, ICU, NARC, G.A.C. Group) gathered in Beirut, Lebanon. On the first day, a Consortium meeting was organised so each partner could give an update on their activities. These meetings are very important since they enable partners to discuss together the progress within the GOTHAM activities and bottlenecks, if there are any. After lunch, two sessions were held to specifically discuss the Lebanese case study. Amin Shaban, Hydrogeologist at National Council for Scientific Research – Lebanon (CNRS-L) gave a presentation on the existing challenges and the proposed solutions regarding the assessment of water resources in the context of the Lebanese case study. Then, Marie-Therese Abi-Saab, water quality project expert, shared the results of the project team’s work on the status of water quality in laa-Baalbeck. Those two presentations led to vivid discussions between the two experts and the project team. Mr Haydar Moawiya, Head of the Expropriation & Water Rights Service at the Ministry of Energy and Water, was also present.

On the second day, partners travelled from Beirut to laa to visit the case study site. After a two and a half hours drive, the GOTHAM project team was welcomed by Hussein Chafic Abdul Sater, Mayor of laa. Together with Houssam Slaymen, Head of the Agricultural Resource Department at Baalbeck–Hermel Governorate, they shared with the group some context regarding the water and groundwater-related challenges in laa and the region. After visiting a wastewater treatment plant, the project partners headed to the laa Country Club to meet with the local stakeholders. Hussein Hoteit, ICU and Project Manager of Lebanese case study was able to gather more than 20 stakeholders: farmers, well owners, water producers, water users with whom a workshop was held, co-animated by G.A.C. Group, ICU and CETAQUA. Hussein Chafic Abdul Sater, Mayor of laa, along with Jihad Haydar, Baalbeck–Hermel Governorate representative, Ihab Jomaa from Lebanese Agricultural Research Institute and Majida Mcheik Head of program department at the Ministry of Agriculture were also present. The workshop enabled to gather and gain a deeper understanding of the stakeholders’ perspective on groundwater management issues, to discuss their needs and help the team developing the GTool to further assess the needs and try to adapt the tool to the specificities of the case study. This occasion was also grasped by G.A.C., leader of the communication activities, to conduct videos interviews to be shared on GOTHAM social media channels as part of the #VoicesOfGOTHAM series. Before traveling back to Beirut, the group had the chance to visit the city of Baalbeck, hosting some incredible ruins from the Greco-Roman period.



## Next steps

Next time project partners will meet will be in March, in Malaga, Spain for the GOTHAM project’s final event. Stay tuned!

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### THE GOTHAM CONSORTIUM

