

Role and Tasks of the Complaints Authority

Session2–October 2025

This activity is implemented in collaboration with Expertise France under the EU funded Project “Supporting progress in key areas of public administration reform in Lebanon” (2023-2027).



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“The Knowledge Lab” in Public Procurement (KLPP) is a collaborative initiative by the Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan (IOF) designed to develop specialized learning content and reform-driven expertise in public procurement. The ultimate objective is to empower a national network of experts and bridge the gap between evolving procurement laws and real-world professional application.

Objectives

- Standardize Knowledge: Align trainers on technical topics and international best practices.
- Content Creation: Develop interactive, rapid-learning materials for continuous education.
- Professional Support: Equip officials with practical tools for informed decision-making.
- Policy Impact: Drive legislative reform and a culture of critical thinking.

Methodology

The program follows a practical, four-phase collaborative process:

- Identification: Selecting priority technical topics.
- Preparation: Nominating an expert facilitator to co-design content with IOF.
- Delivery: Conducting focused, interactive sessions using case studies and simulations.

Output: Finalizing high-impact learning materials and sector-wide resources.

Overview

The second session entitled "Role and Tasks of the Complaints Authority" aimed at leveling the knowledge about the future Complaints Authority, its core principles, and its interaction within the broader public sector landscape.

A group of participants including trainers and key resource people participated in this knowledge lab formed of public procurement practitioners, judges and lawyers from several institutions and public administrations such as the Ministry of Finance, Justice, Agriculture, and others.

Session Structure and Key Discussions

The second session of the Knowledge Lab was divided into three main parts, as detailed below:

Part One: Classification and Functional Divisions of the Complaints Authority

The first part of the session established the **core conceptual and institutional framework** for the future Complaints Authority. It began with a comprehensive overview of the Authority's **mandate, organizational structure**, and its **strategic relationship** with the Public Procurement Authority.

The discussion emphasized **three essential pillars** for effective complaint management:

- › **Simplicity of procedures**
- › **Speed of processing**
- › **Prevention of unnecessary delays**

An interactive brainstorming exercise followed, inviting participants to analyze the risks associated with launching tenders during the pre-contract phase. Through collective reflection, participants identified major challenges—such as inappropriate procurement methods and poorly drafted bidding documents and reached a consensus that this early phase is critical to ensuring transparency and integrity in public procurement.

The session concluded with a detailed presentation of the Authority's **governance and operational framework**, addressing:

- › Eligibility, appointment, and employment conditions for the Chairperson and members;
- › Core obligations of **fairness, transparency, and confidentiality**;
- › Internal regulations and administrative protocols guiding daily operations.

The dialogue was enriched by an overview of **international models** and **global best practices** related to complaints management authorities

Part Two: The Legal Nature of the Complaints Authority and Formulating a Unified Definition

- › The second part examined the legal and operational nature of the Complaints Authority as an Independent Administrative Authority (Autorité Administrative Indépendante) operating within a legal framework similar to the french "*Recours Administratif Préalable Obligatoire (RAPO)*".
- › Discussions focused on the procedural architecture of the Authority, including a detailed presentation of the three levels of complaint submission and the relationship between the Complaints Authority and the State Council. The session also included benchmarking with best practices. Participants explored the balance between rights and responsibilities, reviewed international best practices, and discussed the implications of misusing the complaint process as outlined in Chapter 8 of the Public Procurement Law, which could range from financial penalties, imposed by the Public Procurement Authority at the request of the Complaints Authority, to exclusion from tenders.
- › The session also emphasized the system-wide impacts of establishing the Complaints Authority, particularly its role in strengthening principles and procedures necessary to establish a trust relationship with the private sector through the instauration of an effective complaints mechanism, the improving spending efficiency, and promoting integrity and trust across the public procurement system.

Part Three: Axes for Discussion

- › Part three of the Knowledge Lab session 2 delved into the operating mechanism of the Complaints Authority as well as the review process stated in Chapter 7 of the PP Law. To ground the discussion in real-world consequences, a practical exercise prompted participants to identify the tangible losses resulting from the Authority's non-establishment. Key issues highlighted included the frequent stalling of bidding processes and a high volume of complaints being diverted directly to the State Council, overburdening the judicial.
- › The discussion further explored the key features of an effective complaints mechanism and highlighted the necessary integration within the oversight system, where the specialized Complaints Authority operates in the pre-contract stage within specific time-bound mechanisms.
- › The session including reducing the need for complaints when proper oversight exists over procurement actions, the operating procedures and collaboration between the Complaints Authority and other oversight bodies, and the role of the State Council in the absence of a fully established Complaints Authority, as well as the main challenges and institutional gaps.

Evaluation Results

The evaluation of the second session of the "Knowledge Lab in Public Procurement" on the role tasks of the Complaints Authority was conducted through interactive discussions and observation of participant engagement during the group exercises and general discussions. Particular attention was given to participants' ability to apply legal concepts, engage in case-based discussions, and demonstrate understanding of the material related to the roles and functions of the Public Procurement Authority.

Overall, the results indicated a high level of engagement among experts, improved conceptual understanding, and strong potential for knowledge transfer within institutional contexts.

Outcomes

Recommendations

- Conduct a specific training / workshop with the same audience on Chapter 7 of the law “Complaints mechanism”, with the objective to have a common understanding of this chapter’s provisions among all trainers.
- Lobby for the establishment of the Complaints Authority, as it is a cornerstone of the new public procurement system.

Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Participants

Name	Institution	Position
Basma Abdul Khalek	Institute of Finance	Senior Economist
Suzanne Abou Chacra	Institute of Finance	Training Specialist
Rana Akoum	Ministry of Justice	Judge
Antoine Bakhos	Electricite du Liban (EDL)	Head of Training Department
Manal Bilal	Ministry of Finance	Contracts Supervisor
Bassem Chaaban	Lebanese Army	Colonel
Lina Diab	Institute of Finance	Lawyer and Legal expert
Omar El Barraaj	Public Procurement Authority	Engineer – Head of IT Department
Ziad el Cheikh	Ministry of Finance	Expenditures Controller – Public Procurement expert
Jean Ellieh	Public Procurement Authority	President
Hekmat Daw	Ministry of Agriculture	Civil Engineer
Faysal Makki	Beirut Enforcement Court	Judge
Daad Najjar	Akl Sheikhdome of the Druze Unitarian Community	Head of Finance Department
Fida Labaky	Electricite du Liban (EDL)	Engineer - Trainer
Elie Maalouf	Court of Accounts	Judge and Procurement Expert
Andy Rahme	Institute of Finance	Intern
Rana Rizkallah	Institute of Finance	Public Procurement Expert
Mhammad Saif Eldine	Ministry of Finance	Contracts Supervisor
Hoda Saber	Ministry of Finance	Expenditure Controller
Rana Tauk	Court of Accounts	Senior Controller

Appendix 2: Knowledge Lab Agenda

Title: Role and Functions of the Complaints Authority

Location: Institut des Finances Basil Fuleihan

Date: October 3, 2025

8:30	<p>Reception of participants Reminder of the objectives of the Knowledge Lab and the session’s work program</p>
8:30-10:30	<p>First Session: Classification and Functional Divisions of the Complaints Authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group Exercise The Impact of the Complaints Authority on the Public Procurement System <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group Exercise Moderator: Judge Faysal Makki</p>
10:30-10:45	Break
10:45-12:00	<p>Second Session: The Legal Nature of the Complaints Authority General Discussion and Drafting of an Initial Definition <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Individual work to identify Conditions for Appointing the Chairperson and Members of the Complaints Authority Moderator: Judge Faysal Makki and Judge Rana Akoum</p>
12:00-12:30	Break
12:30-14:00	<p>Third Session: Group Discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operating Mechanism of the Authority ▪ Relationship with other Administrative Bodies Losses Resulting from the Absence of the Complaints Authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Key Challenges and Consequences Moderator: Judge Faysal Makki and Judge Rana Akoum</p>
14:00-14:30	<p>Suggestions Tab and General Recommendations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In terms of learning and training ▪ At the policy level Moderator: Judge Faysal Makki and Judge Rana Akoum</p>