

Interview questions (KIIs) - Trade Sector

Sector Performance:

- How would you describe the current state of the Trade sector in Lebanon? (e.g., thriving, stagnating, evolving, etc.)
- What was the overall turnover of the trade (wholesale/retail) sector in 2023? Did it increase or decrease when compared to the year 2022 (in dollar value)? By how much?
 - Did it increase or decrease when compared to the year 2019 before the crisis in dollar values? By how much?
 - How much does it represent of GDP currently?
 - Is there some further improvement in the first quarter of 2024? In which subsectors? Why?
 - What are the top performing subsectors? Why?
- What are the subsectors that witnessed a decrease in their turnover? Why?
- Have sales of locally-made products on the local market increased last year in 2023 when compared to 2022? What about when compared to the year 2019 before the crisis in dollar values?
- Could the trading sector get more involved in the distribution of locally-produced goods on the domestic market and abroad?
- What are the incentives that the government can create to encourage traders to engage more in the distribution of local products on the local market and abroad?

Workforce and Skills:

- What is the size of the total workforce employed in the trade (wholesale/retail) sector?
 - What is the percentage of Lebanese workers?
 - Does the trade sector suffer from a lack of skilled human resources?
 - What are your proposals to address this problem?

Business Environment and Challenges:

- Are salary adjustments affecting your profit margins?
- What are the laws that are unfavorable to the trading sector that need to be amended?
 - What are the taxes in the 2024 budget that target traders and that must be challenged legally?
- What must the authorities do to fight dumping?
- What must the authorities do to fight smuggling?
- What must the authorities do to protect brands distributed by traders from counterfeiting activities?

Legislation and Regulations:

- What are the new laws that need to be passed to create a favorable business environment for traders?
 - What are the laws that are still being deliberated in Parliament that would create a favorable business environment for traders?
 - Are some existing laws unfavorable to the industrial sector (such as the one dealing with non-residential rent)?
- What are the administrative formalities that are encumbering the activity of traders that need to be streamlined (exports, imports, tax payments)?
- What are the taxes/customs duties that specifically target traders and that must be lowered or removed?
- What are your demands regarding the need to regulate the involvement of Syrian refugees in business activity?
- Does Lebanon need to amend trade agreements with other countries? Which ones? Why?
- Should Lebanon conclude new trade agreements with other countries? Which ones? Why?
- What are the demands that were recently implemented and what are the concerned entities that have implemented them?

Future Outlook

1. What is your outlook for the future of the Trade sector in Lebanon? (e.g., optimistic, pessimistic, uncertain)