

Environment and Natural Resources



In the Environment sector, UNDP works with the Palestinian government to protect the environment and to sustainably manage natural resources. Sustainable management of natural resources is essential for the survival of communities and the very basis for national development. UNDP also promotes climate change mainstreaming, adaptation and mitigation to respond to the potentially increasing scarcity of natural resources and manage climate change associated risks. UNDP has been working very closely with key Palestinian institutions at the national and local level to address the environmental issues and concerns and develop the needed

infrastructure to control pollution and prevent degradation of natural resources.

The environment and natural resources portfolio of USD 25 million focuses on four main outputs

1. Strengthening environmental and water governance, including preparedness for global environmental agenda;
2. Mobilizing environmental financing;
3. Improving access to environmental services (water supply, and sanitation, solid waste management, and energy);
4. Mainstreaming environment and climate change, developing the capacities of Palestinian State institutions in climate change adaptation

and mitigation, and developing the first initial national communication report, including the development of inventory for Green House Gases.

UNDP between 2015 and 2016 will be focusing on mainstreaming environment and climate change at the national level and improving the regulatory role for the protection of natural resources. This will include developing the capacities of Palestinian State institutions on climate change issues, disaster risk management, enforcement of environmental regulations and improving environmental services. UNDP will initiate development of a study on the cost of environmental degradation, which will quantify the financial loss associated with degradation of natural resources and pollution of the environment. In addition, UNDP is developing an action plan for renewable energy in the Gaza Strip.

Climate Change and Disaster Risk Management: Despite the fact that the climate change (CC) and disaster risk management (DRM) are quite new areas for the Palestinian government, UNDP succeeded in building great momentum in mainstreaming CC and DRM issues and placing them on the Palestinian national agenda. While the main partners for CC are the Environment Quality Authority and five related ministries including the Palestinian Water Authority, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Transportation, Palestinian Energy Authority and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics; the main counterpart is the Office of the President and the national technical team that consists of almost 15 Palestinian institutions including the Palestinian Red Crescent Society. The main donors supporting the programme are the Government of Belgium, the EU, while the Government of Iceland supports DRR.

Rubble removal and solid waste management: Solid waste management and rubble removal continues to be major programmes (especially after the Gaza war), as they comprise 84% (USD 21 million) of the on going environment portfolio. The solid waste management programme has development

and emergency/humanitarian components. The development component is related to the expansion and rehabilitation of landfills in the Gaza Strip and in Jericho - West Bank, while the emergency one is related to the last war on Gaza and aims to create job opportunities through immediate support to primary solid waste collection. UNDP is considered the main player in this sector, especially in the Gaza Strip. The same applies for the rubble removal programme, which amounts to USD 14 million. The main donors for the rubble removal and solid waste sector projects are USAID, SIDA, Italy and Japan.

Water and sanitation: Access to water and sanitation remains a key priority. However, UNDP's focus is more on wastewater related issues such as conducting feasibility studies for wastewater management addressing the cross-boundary issues, construction of collection systems and treatment plants, building the capacities of the local authorities and municipalities on water and wastewater management with focus on tariffs and cost recovery issues that are associated with the sustainability of the services. The construction of Khan Younis wastewater treatment plant, in the Gaza Strip, with a total fund of USD 56 million, remains the largest project UNDP/PAPP is implementing in the sector.

The GEF/SGP: The Global Environment Facility/ Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP) is a global programme that engages civil society organisations and supports local leadership to achieve global environmental sustainability and improve livelihoods of local and marginalised communities. UNDP will continue to work with EQA and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to support the Palestinian Government's access to global environmental funding mainly the GEF funding; especially after the Biological Diversity Convention entered into force for the State of Palestine on 02 April 2015. This will substantially improve access to global funds and will have a great opportunity to mainstream environment and improve its status in the State of Palestine.

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