

STATE OF PALESTINE

TERRITORIAL ORGANIZATION

The State of Palestine is a unitary republic, divided into two main geographical units: the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It comprises two different levels of subnational government: there are 16 governorates and 405 local government units. At the regional level, governorates are managed by governors who are nominated by the president and are under the direct supervision of the Ministry of the Interior; half the members are elected by the Provincial General Council, the remaining half is appointed by the governor. At the local level, there are four categories of municipalities (A, B, C and D), varying according to demographic criteria. Also, a number of municipalities (the so-called “new municipalities”) were established following the Oslo Accords of 1993 and 1995.¹



Unless otherwise indicated, all the information in this profile is taken from the previously published Voluntary National Review (VNR).²

1. NATIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SDG IMPLEMENTATION

Although Palestine incorporated the SDGs in its **National Policy Agenda (NPA) 2017-2022** and submitted a VNR in 2018, little progress has been achieved because of limited resources and the continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank and blockade of Gaza.³

1.1 NATIONAL COORDINATION MECHANISMS

The **National SDGs Team** is headed by the **Prime Minister** with membership of all interested parties of governmental organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector. It tackles the coordination responsibility for national efforts to follow-up and implement the SDGs. It is supported by 12 **national SDG working groups**. These are composed of representatives from NGOs, private sector and academic institutions.⁴

1.2 VNR ELABORATION PROCESS

The **Prime Minister's Office** led the 2018 VNR process, with the support of a **steering committee** comprising senior level officials, a dedicated **drafting team** and the **National SDGs Team**. Over 500 mid-level and high-level representatives of governmental institutions, UN Agencies, local and international NGOs, civil society, academic institutions and the private sector participated in deliberations aimed at ensuring an inclusive process and representation of all segments of the Palestinian society in the reporting process. This included data collection, dissemination and mainstreaming of the information on goals and targets, alongside participating in discussions on the prioritization and localization of the SDGs.

1.3 MONITORING

The **Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)** is responsible for adapting and monitoring the SDG indicators in cooperation with all relevant ministries and national institutions, and in coordination with international organizations, especially UN agencies. The PCBS formed an internal **technical task force** to monitor the methodology and provision of data for SDG indicators. But the collection of data in Palestine remains highly challenging due to the restrictions imposed on the access of the government to certain areas of the occupied Palestinian territory (Jerusalem, Area C). Financial and capacity restrictions also play a role in the lack of the availability of some of the indicators. Data on only 109 out of 244 SDG indicators is available.

1. See: <https://portal.cor.europa.eu/divisionpowers/Pages/Palestine-Introduction.aspx>

2. See: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/20024VNR2018PalestineNEWYORK.pdf> (2018)

3. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, <https://www.gold.ucig.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf>

4. The responsibility of the working groups is to regularly track the progress of their specific goal(s). As a result of establishing the SDG working groups, the number of stakeholders engaged in the follow-up and implementation of the SDGs increased to more than 300 stakeholders from various sectors.

2. LRGs INVOLVEMENT IN SDG LOCALIZATION

The **Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA)** and local authorities have been invited to contribute to the national SDG coordination mechanism through ad-hoc consultations (during a few punctual meetings). However, when the State of Palestine presented its 2018 VNR, APLA was neither informed nor involved in the process.⁵ On its side, APLA has been particularly active regarding SDG localization. It has established the Palestinian City Managers Network (PCMN), which involves higher-level administrators responsible for running the day-to-day operations of Palestinian municipalities, and has historically been proactive in global networks of local authorities and in the effort of granting their members increasing visibility on the international stage.⁶

Until 2020 neither APLA nor any local authority was part of the SDG national team. In 2020, there was an arrangement with the Prime Minister's Office to include APLA in this team, yet as of 2021, APLA was still not invited. The **improvement in multilevel coordination for SDG implementation** in 2020 was due to the integration of APLA's Policy Coordinator to the SDG 11 national team led by the Ministry of Local Government. There, APLA's participation and involvement was very active, and the association reports excellent coordination with the ministry. They both started working on defining priorities for local governments by identifying specific goals, targets and indicators in order to measure and coordinate the achievements of the local authorities in relation with the SDGs. A mutual agreement between APLA and the Ministry of Local Government was adopted, and the data gathering for the chosen local SDG indicators shall start soon.⁷

2.1 LRGs PARTICIPATION

► In the VNR process



► In national coordination mechanisms for SDG implementation



This assessment is based on the information collected in the VNR and in the Global Taskforce of Local and Regional Governments' annual survey on the localization of the SDGs.

2.2 VNR REFERENCES

References to LRGs are very limited in the 2018 VNR.

2.3 SPECIFIC PROJECTS AND CASES

► The **Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA)** issued a booklet targeting local authorities with a simplified explanation of their role in achieving the SDGs. It has also launched a social media awareness campaign on the Goals, therefore providing a roadmap for a more balanced and just urban development. In addition, APLA launched the "Good Citizenship and Good Governance" campaign, through which many messages were broadcasted through short videos to citizens and local authorities. Its content was related to attaining economic independence, social justice and the rule of law, providing quality, inclusive education and comprehensive and accessible health care and creating a sustainable and resilient society. Also, APLA is preparing an SDG platform for Palestine, so as to present local authorities' contributions to SDG implementation, based on indicators and by presenting best practices.⁸

► In **Ramallah**, the preparation of the resilience plan involved working groups from the Municipal Council, universities and the private sector, as well as conversations with local political and community leaders. Ramallah has also joined the 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) network.

2.4 VOLUNTARY SUBNATIONAL AND/OR LOCAL REVIEWS (VSRs / VLRs)

Not applicable.

5. Answer of the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) to the GTF Survey in 2021.

6. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, <https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf>

7. Answer of the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) to the GTF Survey in 2021.

8. Answer of the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) to the GTF Survey in 2021.

2.5 MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

No reference.

3. RELEVANT INFORMATION

General comments: Palestine's geographic and administrative structure derives from its particular history and status. Is the consequence of its particular history and status. It is divided into two main geographical units: the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This spatial configuration has led to a relative autonomy in terms of municipal authority, also considering the impact of territorial fragmentation as caused by the Israeli occupation. Today urban governance is largely decentralized and elected local authorities are responsible for planning, managing growth within their boundaries, (e.g. water, power) and granting of building permits. In 2005 and 2006, there was a rise of agglomeration into joint councils for shared service provision and development planning. At the national level, the Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF), established in 2005, provides municipalities with grants and loan guarantees and programmes to strengthen their financial management capabilities. It has channelled significant funding from international donors for municipal infrastructure, capacity development, and other municipal activities.⁹

3.1 WOMEN PARTICIPATION

Women occupy 20% of the seats of the local councils.

3.2 COVID 19

The Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) has worked with the Palestinian government to follow-up on local authorities' needs, and has coordinated with the donors to supply local governments with preventative equipment to protect their front-line workers. APLA also broadcasted support messages to local authorities through its regular and widely circulated media productions. APLA issued a position paper about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Palestinian local authorities, how they dealt with this crisis, the challenges they faced and their most important needs. APLA also identified priority interventions to be worked on in the post-pandemic era. In addition, due to the financial hardship local authorities are undergoing for having ensured the continuity of public service delivery and implemented emergency plans to protect their citizens' health, APLA highlighted the risk of forcing municipalities and village councils to cut down on the services they provide to citizens, including basic services, in the near future. APLA's executive committee called for the need to look for a quick solution, that includes rescheduling all due debts owed by local authorities. In this regard, it was agreed to form a joint committee with the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Finance and APLA to examine local authorities' debts and agree on a mechanism to reschedule them on binding grounds for all parties.¹⁰

9. UCLG, 2019, GOLD V Report, <https://www.gold.uclg.org/sites/default/files/ENG-GOLD-V-2020.pdf>

10. Answer of the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) to the GTF Survey in 2021.

4. SDG INDICATORS¹¹

5.5.1. (b) Proportion of seats held by women (%) in local governments		21.2 (2019)
6.1.1. Proportion of population using safely managed drinking water services (%)	Urban	81 (2020)
	Rural	76 (2020)
6.2.1. (a) Proportion of population using safely managed sanitation services (%)	Urban	72 (2020)
	Rural	48 (2020)
11.1.1. Proportion of population living in slums, informal settlements or inadequate housing (%)		42.3 (2018)
11.6.1. Proportion of municipal solid waste collected and managed (%)		-
11.6.2. Air pollution – annual means of particulate matter in cities (population weighted)		-
11.b.2. Proportion of local governments that have adopted local disaster risk reduction strategies in line with national strategies (%)		100 (2018)

11. The data used for this table come from the UN SDG Indicators Database. See: <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/UNSDG/IndDatabasePage>. More information on the country's progress towards the SDGs here: <https://country-profiles.unstatshub.org/pse>