

# Strengthening of Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Areas Programme II (LHP II)

## Background

The scarcity of income opportunities in rural areas of the West Bank affects the ability of Palestinians to secure their livelihoods. The agriculture sector is characterized by a high level of informality, especially for women who mainly work as unpaid family members.

The resilience of Palestinian farmers is threatened by lacking access to water and land, intensifying impacts of climate change, and political developments, including the effects of the war in Ukraine. Consequences include an uptick in rural-urban migration, increasing food insecurity and rising input-prices in the agricultural sector.

	<p><b>Project name</b> Strengthening of Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Areas II</p> <p><b>Commissioned by</b> German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)</p> <p><b>Project region</b> West Bank</p> <p><b>Partner</b> Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)</p> <p><b>Duration</b> June 2021 – May 2024</p>
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## Objectives

The “Strengthening of Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Areas II” Programme aims to improve the economic prospects of the rural population in the West Bank. To reach this goal, it pursues the following objectives:

- Enhance the capacities of the Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture and other experts to deliver improved (digital) advisory services to the rural population.
- Increase the availability of agricultural water for Palestinian farmers and reduce the costs of it.
- Leverage the conditions for income generation and employability in the Palestinian agricultural sector (e.g., market access) especially for cooperatives.
- Improve women’s access to self-capitalized Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLAs).

## Approach

The “Strengthening of Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural Areas” Programme is implemented by GIZ in close cooperation with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and its regional entities according to its current strategies. The programme is currently in its second phase. It is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and coordinates closely with other donors, GIZ programmes, and civil society partners who are active in the sector to achieve maximum sustainable effects for Palestinians.

The programme follows a multilevel approach with a focus on the meso and micro levels. On the meso level the emphasis is on strengthening advisory services. The programme builds on successful approaches and experiences from its first phase and develops them further, so that advisory services follow a more integrated approach especially regarding irrigation, farming methods, new products, marketing, business development and targeted access to finance for rural women. On the micro level technical and



L. to r.: A West Bank farmer’s fresh radish harvest; water infrastructure in Tulkarem Governorate.



Left: Access to enough clean water is indispensable for agricultural activities such as livestock farming, cash crop production or subsistence agriculture. Qalqiliya 2018.

Right: An all-female agricultural engineers' cooperative for bee-keeping in Shweikeh showcases its work.

advisory capacities are strengthened and digital tools are opening access to services for new target groups. A strong cooperation system with local expert organisations from civil society is crucial for the implementation of these activities.

*“Sustainable agricultural development, strengthening food security and improving farmers’ resilience and steadfastness on their lands are among the most important national development priorities.”*

- Ibtisam I.O. Abuhajja, Ministry of Agriculture

## Achievements of LHP I & II

- Construction of 19 agricultural infrastructure projects, including improved irrigation networks, water tanks, solar-powered irrigation systems, water harvesting systems, and improvements in water management. 6 of these were constructed in LHP II, through which 250 farmers benefit from increased water availability and improved resilience against changing rainfall and weather patterns. One more infrastructure project is in planning.
- 58 Village Saving and Loan Associations (VSLA) have been initiated in both project phases, out of which 39 were established in LHP II. A total of 286 loans for income generating activities were given out, out of which 192 were dispensed in LHP II. Through this process, 155 micro businesses have been established in LHP II. An app for the improvement of financial management has been created and more than 40 trainings for the proper usage of the app were implemented.
- Strengthened capacities of extension advisors and cooperatives through trainings in business development,

marketing, gender, and the use of modern media in agricultural extension services with a total of 65 participants.

- Support of ten young entrepreneurs in advancing their ideas for innovative irrigation technologies into business models. The three winning projects are now developing prototypes.
- Training of 21 fresh graduates (20 female) in financial management, accounting, online-marketing, administration of cooperatives, and food production- and safety. Subsequently, 16 graduates completed paid internships in agricultural cooperatives for 4 to 6 months.
- During LHP II, 32 cooperatives were provided with equipment and technical support to identify new products and market requirements (e.g., packaging and labelling). Two special exhibitions were supported by LHP II, one for grapes in Jenin and one for local products in Tulkarem.



VSLAs are self-managed community-based groups that give out loans to their members, derived from accumulated savings. The picture shows the local female-led micro-business “The Palestinian Kitchen” in the Qalqiliya Governorate, that emerged out of a VSLA.

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