**Governance**

Local Governance Reform Programe II (LGRP II)

# Background

Palestinian local government units (LGUs) have a storied history which predates the establishment of the Palestinian Authority. They are the key institutions for delivering services to citizens. Yet only a small number of LGUs can fulfil all the functions mandated by law.

The multifold effects of Israeli occupation, territorial and social fragmentation, the difficult financial situation, and lack of clarity of LGUs roles and responsibilities are key impediments to an effective service delivery of Palestinian LGUs. As Palestinians have advanced their state building process, the interplay of different government levels is being redefined and the local governance sector is undergoing important reforms to build bridges between the state and its citizens.

# Objective

In its second commissioning period, the Local Governance Reform Programme (LGRP II) supports municipalities and Village Councils in improving their performance in service delivery.

LGRP II is implemented by GIZ in close partnership with the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), the Municipal Devel-opment and Lending Fund (MDLF), and the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA), in addition to other national bodies such as The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), as well as selected LGUs and civil society organizations. The programme was co-financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and coordinates closely with other donors active in the sector to achieve maximum sustainable effects.

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| Project name | Local Governance Reform Programme II |
| Commisioned by | The German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) |
| Co-Financed by | Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC  (September 2019 – April 2022) |
| Project region | Palestinian Territories |
| Partners | Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) |
| Duration | April 2019 – March 2023 |

# Approach

**The Programme works in four main interventions areas:**

**(1) Strengthening participatory local & spatial planning:** Improved participation of citizens in local planning contributes to more inclusive and responsive development plans, focussing on priority needs of the local population. Including considerations of climate change and environment as well as available budget for proposed projects fosters the implementation of adopted plans. This allows LGUs to utlilize their limited financial resources more effectively and to manage expactations of the public. Enhanced availability and access to data of various LGU departments and other relevant institutions and use of digital technologies increases the efficiency of processes and improves quality and transparency of development decisions.

**(2) Improve local financial management & access to finance** Efficient and transparent management of financial resources is a key element towards improved local service provision. Enhanced tools and procedures of financial management of LGUs and more accurate calculation and monitoring of costs of essential services contribute to a more effective use of revenue potentials. Other measures aim at enhancing local government procedures to maximize their potentials for own source revenue generation.

**(3) Strengthening constructive state-society-relations:** Institutionalization of Social Accountability tools such as public hearings, social audits or expenditure tracking promotes constructive interaction of citizens and local governments on their performance. Additionally, enhanced audits as well asstandardized Grievance Redressal Mechanisms enable LGUs acting more transparent and accountable. This is complemented by promotion of solution-based citizen journalism and other measures fostering a constructive dialogue between citizens and local governments.

**(4) Improve vertical and horizontal relations between different administrative levels:** Clear roles and responsibilities of LGUs towards their citizens and vis-à-vis the national level is a prerequisite for effective local governments. Structured exchange and learning between LGUs are strengthening coordination of local governments amongst each other. Through partnerships with German LGUs and regional exchange, Palestinian LGUs benefit from international expertise. A capacitated Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) performs as an important stakeholder for the promotion of local government interests and issues at the national policy level.

All LGRP II interventions are implemented with a special focus on active involvement and participation of women and marginalized groups to effectively bring in their voices, needs and priorities. Tools and approaches developed consider the different levels of capacities and resources of municipalities and Village Councils.

# Achievements

Selected achievements of the programme include :

* Reformed methodology for local development planning has made public participation of citizens, especially marginalized groups obligatory. Also, climate change resilience aspects are more coherently included in the planning process.
* A technical support unit (Master Planning Hub) for Northern governorates is established to enhance urban planning capacities and the process of master planning.
* Higher Planning Council processes are digitalized, making decisions more efficient and coherent.
* Community-driven recreation of public spaces (“placemaking”) finalised in 7 locations in the West Bank and 5 locations in Gaza.
* A coordination structure for establishing a Spatial Data Infrastructure (SDI) involving all relevant stakeholders is active and advises on policies and standards for data exchange.
* Minimum standards for Grievance Redressal Mechanisms of LGUs developed.
* A tool to calculate and analyze the costs of providing local services is developed and tested in several LGUs.
* A comprehensive tool to assess financial management capacities and suggesting an action plan to improve the fiscal abilities of LGUs is developed and tested in several LGUs.
* Tool for citizen-friendly format of LGU budgets is implemented in LGUs and integrated into the central financial portal of LGUs.
* Social accountability tools and manuals mainstreamed for LGUs and citizens.
* Virtual and interactive formats of solution-oriented citizen journalism implemented.
* Technical knowledge exchange platforms for LGU staff on different topics are institutionalized via APLA.