

The project is funded by Norwegian Government and implemented by UNDP/PAPP



Progress Report

Wadi Gaza Coastal Wetland Conservation and Development

31 December 2018

Reporting Period	11 December 2017 – 31 December 2018
Donor	Government of Norway
Country	occupied Palestinian territory
Project Title	Wadi Gaza Coastal Wetland Conservation and Development
Atlas Award ID	00107971
Project ID	00108030
Outputs (Atlas Project ID and Description)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A comprehensive Master Plan for Development, Protection and Conservation of Wadi Gaza.2. The Institutional Frameworks Options for Realising and Delivering the Global Palestine-Connected Gaza Study.
Implementing Partner(s)	United Nations Development Programme / Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People
Project Start Date	11 December 2017
Project End Date	30 June 2019
Total Budget	USD 328,129.24 (USD 298,129.24 from NoR and USD 30,000 from UNDP)
Revenue received	USD 298,129.24 (NOK 2,500,000)
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I. Executive Summary

This report summarizes the progress made as of 31 December 2018 in relation to project title's "Wadi Gaza Coastal Wetland Conservation and Development". The project aims to contribute to an evidence-based and sustainable rehabilitation and protection of Wadi Gaza natural reserve and coastal wetland which will in turn contribute to considerable health benefits and increased economic opportunities for the surrounding population.

During the reporting period, the project shows advance progress towards the realization of the intended outputs. The project Technical Steering Committee was established and met to discuss the ToR of the committee and the ToR for the consultancy firm that will conduct the master plan. The Request for Proposal was advertised, and ten consultancy firms submitted their technical and financial offers. The received offers were evaluated by an evaluation committee which consists of four UNDP staff.

The contract was awarded to the lowest responsive offer. The inception report for the development of Wadi Gaza master plan was finalized. The draft baseline information was prepared and distributed to the steering committee for review. In December 5, 2018, a workshop was conducted as part of stakeholders' engagement in the preparation of the master plan for the Wadi Gaza.

In addition, the development of the Institutional Frameworks Options for Realizing and Delivering the Global Palestine-Connected Gaza has been completed.

Up to date the amount of USD 183,912 was disbursed from NOR contribution which equals 61.7% of the total received amount.

Regarding UNDP contribution, the amount of USD 120,080 was disbursed out of USD 137,312 which equals 87.5%

II. Background

Wadi Gaza is considered one of the most important coastal wetlands located on the Eastern Mediterranean Basin, very rich in biological diversity (both flora and fauna¹). Therefore, it is included on the Tentative List² of Palestine among the site that can be proposed for inscription on the prestigious World Heritage List as Wadi Gaza Coastal Wetlands (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5722/>) within the framework of the World Heritage Convention ratified by Palestine in 2011. Wadi Gaza is considered by the PA as one of the most important coastal wetlands located on the Eastern Mediterranean Basin, very rich in biological diversity (both flora and fauna). The wadi is also a station point for the migratory routes from north to south and from south to north. In addition, being the biggest in Gaza and having an

¹¹ Desk Study on the Environment in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, UNEP, 2004; Country Report (Wetland Of Wadi Gaza, Palestine), MedPartnership-Strategic Partnership for the Mediterranean Sea Large Marine Ecosystem; UNESCO-IHP Sub component 1.1 Management of Coastal Aquifers and Groundwaters, by Khaled Kahman, 2014.

outstanding landscape, and being one of the biggest in Palestine, it has the potential for being a recreational area attracting people from different areas.

In recognition of its importance as a natural area and as the only wetland in Palestine, Wadi Gaza was declared as a nature reserve in June 2006. This decision is meant to conserve the wetland and its ecosystem, to halt and slow degradation of its natural resources and biological systems.

Wadi Gaza Nature Reserve is home to at least 154 terrestrial vertebrate species, most notably birds. It also supports a diverse flora with 70 species. Ongoing loss of habitat is increasing habitat fragmentation and reducing habitat connectivity, because of creeping urban development; alteration and destruction of habitats; environmental pollution; intensive use of herbicides and pesticides; and human disturbance.

Currently, the Wadi is polluted by raw sewage disposed of from towns and camps situated in the middle area of the Gaza Strip (Bureij camp, UNRWA pumping station which suffers from overflow during peak hours, some illegal connections etc.). Where around 2,000 m³ of untreated sewage is discharged directly to the Wadi per day. The temporary wastewater treatment (constructed by ICRC) is overloaded and operates partially due to the electricity cut problem. It is designed with a capacity of 12,000 cubic meter per day while it receives more than 18,000 cubic meters per day. The Wadi is also polluted with illegal dumping of solid waste and construction debris. Such practices threaten the existence of the wetland ecosystem and its biodiversity. As such, it is of critical importance to clean, rehabilitate and protect the Wadi in order to maintain its ecosystem and to restore its importance as natural heritage site and wetland and a global strategic location for soaring birds. It will also serve as a recreational location for the Gaza population with great ecotourism potential and for generating green jobs opportunities.

Wadi Gaza shoulders at the neighbourhood of Al Moghraga - Al Zahra area are relatively low (+5 m above MSL) relative to the surrounding land (+8 m to +11m above MSL). Accordingly, when the water level in the Wadi rises, it spreads in the area and floods the neighbouring houses and farms and other properties. In January 2010, a large flood occurred in Wadi Gaza and the neighbourhoods of Al Moghraga - Al Zahra area were severely damaged in terms of properties. Hundreds of people were evacuated since their houses and farms were destroyed. The WASH Cluster Assessment shows high concentration rates of chlorides and nitrates and biological contamination in the water supply for Al Nuseirat Camp.

Recently, the borders of the western part of Wadi Gaza which represent about 50% of Wadi length (4.4 Km out of 9 Km) are well known and has formal maps. This area has natural wetland ecosystem, stopover for several birds. The biodiversity knowledge for Wadi Gaza has not been updated since 16 years and there is lack of information related to the Red List of Wadi Gaza flora and fauna and the economic and medical values of the biodiversity in the Wadi. In addition, there is a clear absence of an institutional body or legal framework, which have to be present in the site and have its own rules, laws and staff to make sure that the area is protected against

any illegal environmental offenses or activities. The presence of any institutional body is critical to ensure the sustainability and a successful exit strategy of the project.

This project will deliver two outputs necessary to provide for that rehabilitation and protection of Wadi Gaza:

1. A comprehensive Master Plan for Development, Protection and Conservation of Wadi Gaza.
2. The Institutional Frameworks Options for Realising and Delivering the Global Palestine-Connected Gaza Study.

III. Progress Review

PROGRESS TOWARDS PROJECT OUTPUTS

OUTPUT 1: A master plan for Wadi Gaza is developed.			
Output Indicators	Baseline	Target	Current status
The printing of the Master Plan itself	Development master plan for Wadi Gaza is not available	The master Development Plan is available	On going
<p>During the reporting period, the project shows advance progress towards the realization of the intended outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Project Technical Steering Committee (PTSC) was established and composed of the government officials from the Environment Quality Authority (EQA), Ministry of Local Government (MOLG), Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) and the Coastal Municipalities' Water Utility (CMWU), in addition to representatives from FAO, UN Environment and UNESCO. NoR participates as an observer. Letters from UNDP were issued to the different ministries to nominate their representatives. • On 27 March 2018, a meeting for the Project Technical Steering Committee was organized. During the meeting, a presentation about Wadi Gaza project was delivered including the overall objective, expected outputs, the available fund, beneficiaries and 			

partners, ToR for the consultancy services for Development of a Comprehensive Master Plan for the Wadi Gaza Area, and the **technical steering committee's** composition and roles in this project were discussed.

- The TOR for the consultancy services was developed and shared with the members of the steering committee for their comments and feedback.
- The Request for proposal was prepared and advertised on 30 April 2018, a pre- bid meeting was held on 8 May 2018 and the consultancy offices raised inquiries which were answered by UNDP project manager and disseminated at UNDP website. The initial closing date for the tender was 22 May 2018 but it was extended till 4 June 2018 upon the request of the consultancy offices and due to the political situation in the Gaza Strip during May 2018.
- Ten offers were received and opened on 6 June 2018.
- An internal committee from UNDP staff was formed to review and evaluate the received proposals. The evaluation committee consists of Shehadeh Habash Procurement Specialist – Head of Procurement Unit, Ahmad Muqbel Procurement Analyst – Gaza, Husam Tubail - Programme Analyst, Hala Othman - Programme Analyst. Mohammad Abu Shaaban: M & E Coordinator.
- The criteria for Technical Evaluation had been set out in the RFP to make sure that consultants know how their offers shall be evaluated. The weighting of the technical scores is 70%. The cut-off points to have a successful technical offer is 70% of the obtainable score of 1,000 points. The Evaluation Committee had carried out technical evaluation for all firms individually, following the same guideline format prepared by UNDP Individual Technical Forms. Consultation on how to proceed with the evaluation process had been carried out among the committee members, to make sure that same criteria are followed by all members. The output of the proposals preliminary examination and whether the submitted proposals are responsive to the RFP requirements is summarized in Technical Evaluation Forms. It has been found that 7 consultants out of 10 are considered for detailed technical evaluation. Then, the financial proposals were opened on 23 July 2018.
- UNDP/PAPP has signed a contract with Joint Venture of National and International Firms which consists of Global Vision Consultant (GVC) and Hydro Nova and Timesis. The amount of the contract is USD 163,250. The initial duration of the contract is from 15 August 2018 till 14 February 2019.
- On 27 September 2018, a meeting was conducted as **part of the stakeholders'** engagement process in the project. The meeting was attended by representatives of different stakeholders including Environment Quality Authority, Ministry of Local

Government, Land authority, Coastal Municipal Water Utility and the five municipalities around the Wadi Gaza. The meeting opened dialogue and interaction between different stakeholders and the consultants.

- The first draft of the inception report which includes the revised approach and methodology was submitted by the firm on 10 September 2018. UNDP staff reviewed the report and provided comments and feedback. The report was distributed to the steering committee members for their review. The consultancy firm finalized the report after taken the comments into consideration.
- The consultant submitted the baseline information report on 25 November 2018. The report covers the baseline information related to the land use, legal status, biodiversity, ecosystem, natural and cultural heritage, infrastructure, environmental pollution, socio economy, water resources and land and institutional framework. UNDP project manager shared the report with the steering committee members for their review and feedback. The international consultant discussed the report with the steering committee members on 4 December 2018. Please find the baseline Report in the following link:
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1I2KqMHsDzqI90heptPMIa5PFDbGO2Hds?usp=sharing>
- UNDP team leader has communicated with Israel Ministry of Water and obtained useful information regarding the flood volume in Wadi Gaza which was shared with the consultant.
- As part of stakeholders' engagement in the preparation of the master plan for the Wadi Gaza, a workshop was conducted on December 5, 2018. Fifty-seven persons were invited, and 50 people attended the workshop, with representatives from different ministries, municipalities, local communities, universities and two representatives from the Norwegian Government. Please see attached annex 2: Draft Master Plan Workshop Report

OUTPUT 2: Institutional Frameworks Options for Realising and Delivering the Global Palestine-Connected Gaza developed

Output Indicators	Baseline	Target	Current Status
The printing and publication of the Study	Draft Study is available	The final Study is available	The study is completed.



IV. Project Risks and Issues

a. Updated project risks and actions

The following matrix summarized the updated risks and action taken:

#	Description	Date Identified	Type	Impact & Probability	Countermeasures / Mngt response	Owner	Submitted, updated by	Last Update	Action Taken
1.	Land acquisition by illegal settlers	December 2017	Operational	Delay in the implementation of the project. Probability (1-5) = 3 Impact (1-5) = 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fencing of Wadi Gaza and strengthening of its banks will require that ownership and land acquisitions are addressed and settled from the beginning of the project. - UNDP will coordinate with the Land Authority and with the MOLG to ensure that these issues are addressed and tackled at an early stage during the planning and development stage 	UNDP	UNDP	June 2018	Not faced during the reporting period



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2	Deterioration of security situation in Gaza	December 2017	External-Political	UNDP and the consultants' mobility and ability to implement the programme is threatened Probability (1-5) = 3 Impact (1-5) = 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNDP will coordinate with the Israeli side to provide access to the consultant and the surveyors during the implementation and at the technical level - Security and contingency planning for UNDP and the consultants - Two-ways sharing of information on security situation 	UNDP	UNDP	November 2018	On 7 November 2018, UNDP staff member and the consultant visited Wadi Gaza to conduct the topographical survey and they have been subjected to a shoot in spite of the previous coordination with the Israeli side. The accident was reported and discussed with UNDSS.
3	Lack of qualified consultants in Gaza Strip in specific areas	March 2018	Operational	Low quality of the final product	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNDP will conduct a quick survey for the available and unavailable required experts. 	UNDP	UNDP	June 2018	According to UNDP quick survey, the unavailable experts in Gaza were identified and requested to be international.

b. Updated project issues and actions

1. UNDP submitted a request for no cost extension for six months due to the delay encountered during the implementation as a result of:
 - Delay in forming the technical steering committee and the response of the ministries
 - Delay in reviewing the ToR by the technical steering committee members
 - Consultancy offices asked extra time to fill the tender documents which was accepted due to the political situation in Gaza during May 2018.
2. UNDP suggested a revised budget #1 because the original planned contribution from NOR equals USD 306,000 while the total amount received is USD 298,124.24. The revised budget was submitted to donor together with progress report #1 and it was approved.
3. UNDP requested no cost extension of the agreement for 6 months from 1 January 2019 till 30 June 2019, and the donor approved it on 18 December 2018.

V. Lessons Learned:

- Extend the Steering committee to include representatives from Ministry of Agriculture and the Land Authority.
- The Ministry of Planning, the Ministry of Tourism, the municipalities and the schools which are located near Wadi are stakeholders and should be consulted and involved during the implementation of the project.
- If the political situation improves, the steering committee to be co-chaired with the main government partner (Environment Quality Authority).

VI. Conclusions and Way Forward

- The following activities will be implemented during the coming three months:
1. Conduct a workshop with the stakeholders to present the second draft of the Master Plan.
 2. Finalize and validate the master plan.
 3. Finalize the investment plan.
 4. Finalize the detailed design of the proposed infrastructure intervention.
 5. Conduct a final workshop to present the results.

VII. Financial Status

The fund received from NOR is USD 298,129.24 (NOK 2,500,000).

Financial Status											
Project Name: Wadi Gaza Coastal Wetland Conservation and Development											
Project Period: December 2017- December - 2018											
All amounts are in USD dollars *exchange rate USD 1= 8.17 Krone as per November UN rate											
Budget item	Number	Unit	Unit cost	Cost		Approved revised budget #1 (NOR)	Approved revised budget #2 (NOR)	Expenditure (USD) till December 2018		Remaining Balance (USD) from NOR contribution	
				UNDP	NOR			UNDP	NOR		
1 Personnel costs (10% of Programme Analyst salary/time)	101,232	staff/ year	101,232	80,985	20,246	20,246	34,056	80,985	22,740	11,316	
2 Travel/transportation (30 visit/meeting * USD 20)	600	per travel	20	600	0	0	0	300	0	0	
3 Specific project-related costs	2,500		2,500	0	2,500	2,500	2,500	0	0	2,500	
4 General Operating Expenses- GOE)	12,000	per staff	12,000	12,000	0	0	0	12,000	0	0	
Security Costs (UNSS) 1,820 + security equipment USD 1,736	1,820	per staff	1,820	1,820	0	0	0	2,500	0	0	
5 Purchase of equipment (security equipment)	1,736	per staff	1,736	1,736	0	0	0	400	0	0	
6 Audit	0		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
7 Direct operating costs, total	18,656		16,156	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	100		2,500	
8 Development of Wadi Gaza Master Plan (USD 230,000)	230,000	per study	30,000	200,000	190,212	176,402	14,900	91,213	85,190		
9 Finalization of the study "Options for Institutional Frameworks to achieve and implement the Gaza Initiative (Gaza: Palestine Gate to the World)	50,000	per study	0	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	50,000	0	0	
10 Miscellaneous activities	10,587		0	10,587	10,587	10,587	0	6,336	4,251		
11 Total project activities	410,475		127,141	283,333	276,045	276,045	111,185	170,289	105,756		
11 General Management Service (GMS 8%)	32,838		10,171	22,667	22,084	22,084	8,895	13,623	8,460		
13 Project costs total	443,313		137,312	306,000	298,129	298,129	120,080	183,912	114,217		

VIII. Annex

Annex 1: Photos

Annex 2: Draft Master Plan Workshop Report

Annex 3: Financial Report Till 31 December 2018

Photos for Workshop and Field Visit

