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NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
P. O. Box 8114 Dep
N-0032 Oslo
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Progress report for grants from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

Progress report form for project/programme support

The report should be sent by email to post@mfa.no with a copy to the unit responsible for the grant.

1. Project information

Name of the grant scheme	Responsible unit for the grant (unit in MFA or Embassy)
Thematic Support at Global, Regional or Country level-Type A	MFA

Agreement title

Promoting Biodiversity and Ecosystem-Based Adaptation to Climate Change in Wadi Gaza Coastal Wetland

Agreement number	Total grant from MFA (NOK)	Reporting period (mm/yyyy – mm/yyyy)
UN ref. no: PAL 10-00107971, Donor ref. no PAL 22/0023	**71,941,476 NOK** Year (1): 10,188,992 NOK Year (2): 30,712,876 NOK Year (3): 30,937,718 NOK	12/2022 - 05/2023

2. About the grant recipient

2.1 Contact information

Name and abbreviation

United Nations Development Programme/ Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP)

Address	Postal code	City	Country
3 Ya'kubi Street, P.O.Box: 51359		Jerusalem	State of Palestine

Telephone	Fax	Email	Website
00972-2-6268200	00972-2-6268222		www.ps.undp.org

Contact person	Email	Telephone/mobile phone
Victor Munteanu, Head of Gaza Office	victor.munteanu@undp.org	00972-2-6268200

3. About the project

3.1 Cooperating partner – any changes (if several changes in cooperating partners, use attachment)

	Contact person
Main partner: Joint Service Council for Wadi Gaza (JSC-WG). **Stakeholders**: The Environment Quality Authority (EQA), Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), Ministry of Agriculture (MoA), Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU).	

Address:	Postal code	City Gaza Strip	Country State of Palestine
Telephone:	Email		Website

For any new cooperating partners, describe briefly their competence and qualifications in relation to the project: N/A

3.2 Grant recipient's and cooperating partner's/partners' respective roles in the project

Describe briefly the cooperation and division of roles between grant recipient and cooperating partner(s)

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UNDP is implementing this project through the Direct Implementation Modality (DIM). UNDP/PAPP is responsible and accountable for managing and implementing the project, including the monitoring and evaluation of the project interventions, and achieving project objectives. In addition, UNDP utilizes its full technical and financial capacities to ensure an efficient and effective implementation of proposed interventions. Throughout the implementation process, UNDP is working with local partners and counterparts to achieve the project's results. UNDP is coordinating and cooperating with the Joint Service Council of Wadi Gaza (JSC-WG) at all stages of the project including design, implementation, final evaluation, and project closure, which will maintain sustainability through ensuring the ownership of the project by JSC-WG.

Joint Service Council for Wadi Gaza (JSC-WG)

The JSC-WG was established in 2021 with the support of UNDP. It comprises five neighbouring municipalities located along the Wadi in Gaza and Middle Area Governorates. The key role and responsibilities of the JSC-WG are as follows:

- Coordinate and follow up with the Ministry of Local Governorate, the Palestinian Land Authority, the five municipalities, and all stakeholders regarding any related issues.
- Support in effectively communicating the project objectives to the residents of the project area.
- Assume full responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the project after its construction and commissioning. As the service provider and final operator of the Wadi Gaza, the JSC-WG plays a crucial role in ensuring the project's sustainability and successful functioning.

National Authorities

- The concerned national authorities include the Environment Quality Authority (EQA), the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), and the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA). They are mainly involved at the technical level as needed to solve problems, provide proper access, and ensure a clear flow of information between the relevant stakeholders.

Steering Committee

A Project Technical Steering Committee (PTSC) was established and consists of UNDP/PAPP, the EQA, MoLG, UNESCO, MoA, PWA, and the Coastal Municipalities Water Utility (CMWU). The duties and responsibilities of the above PTSC are as follows:

- Provide technical input to the project in line with national policies and strategies.
- Play a key role in the facilitation and implementation of project activities and ensuring the sustainability of the initiative.
- Facilitate the work of the consultants and provide them with the needed documents and information.
- Ensure coordination of similar projects in the area and ensure synergy among different projects to achieve higher impacts of the project as much as possible.

3.3 Project implementation – any deviations

Brief description of any deviations between approved application and the actual implementation of the project, with reference to the table in point 4.1 and 4.2. Which consequences may the deviations have on the project's results? Which actions are taken in order to counteract possible delays or manage other deviations?

The original work plan for the full duration of the project followed the following rationale:

- The priority was given to constructing the embankments to mitigate the flood risks and create a safe environment and protection prior to carrying out the remaining activities. The first part of the embankments will be constructed in the first year and will be completed in the second and third years of the project.

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- The remaining activities, such as greening, lighting, and trail construction, were planned to be implemented in the second year and completed in the third year of the project.
- The construction of recreational utilities and facilities is scheduled for the third year.

Currently, certain delays and deviations from the original annual workplan have resulted in greening works being implemented in 2023 instead of 2024 as planned originally. Additionally, part of the embankment implementation, initially scheduled for 2023, is now anticipated to be delayed until 2024.

The deviations are related to the delays in the Wadi Gaza borders delimitation, which are the responsibility of the Gaza's de-facto Land Authority and de-facto Ministry of Local Government. UNDP has actively engaged in negotiations with the respective de facto authorities in Gaza, to ensure the timely finalisation of necessary land surveying and the ability to proceed with engineering works related to the embankment. UNDP has also duly informed Norway Representative Office in Palestine, in order to devise a common strategy of engaging with the de facto authorities in Gaza, ensuring the good progress of the project.

The following describes the progress of activities according to the approved budget for the period from December 2022 to November 2023:

1. **Output 1: Improved institutional capacities of the JSC-WG and targeted municipalities in gender-responsive and sustainable ecosystem management of Wadi Gaza including engagement of the private sector.**

   Progress: No planned activities were scheduled for the reporting period under this output.

2. **Output 2: Enhanced integration of gender-sensitive solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation in the Wadi Gaza operation, including biodiversity protection.**

Planned Activities for the project period (3 years): The planned activities include:

- Planting and watering nursery-grown trees to provide shading over 10,000 m^2 of the Wadi area.
- Construction of a 2.2 KM embankment along the Wadi Gaza throughout the course of three years. This strategic construction initiative aims to mitigate the risk of flooding in areas particularly susceptible to such hazards. The embankments will consist of compacted soil, reinforced with retaining walls, stairs, and ramps as necessary. To ensure a comprehensive approach, an Environmental Assessment Study will be diligently carried out for the embankment intervention within the Wadi, which will ensure the consideration of environmental impact and sustainability.

Planned Activities for the Period December 2022 to November 2023: During this time frame, our primary focus will be on the construction of a 500 m embankment out of the total 2200 m that needs to be built.

Progress: After signing the grant agreement, in December 2022, UNDP hired a consultancy firm to develop a detailed design for the embankment. However, the design process faced unexpected delays due to challenges related to the Wadi boundaries that need to be identified in close collaboration with the different municipalities, Palestinian Land Authority (PLA), and EQA. UNDP/PAPP made exceptional coordination efforts with the relevant authorities, which finally resulted in an endorsement of the activities, on 14 June 2023. However, the requested allocations of land and finalization of the boundaries for Wadi Gaza have not been granted yet, even after the formal endorsement of the project.

The MoLG and PLA are in the process of handing over the final northern Wadi area boundaries for the embankment design. All efforts are directed to speeding up governmental procedures and minimizing the anticipated delays to the project. Still, the southern area boundaries are yet to be finalised and handed over to UNDP.

Although the delay in the design will affect the first year of implementation, measures have been in place to tackle this issue. To mitigate its impact, the workload of the embankment will be distributed among

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multiple contractors for timely implementation. Additionally, we aim to start the greening activity in August 2023, while originally planned for 2024, to minimize the delay impact on the overall project deliverables.

3. **Output 3:** Improved gender-friendly ecotourism infrastructure in Wadi Gaza, including private sector engagement.

   Progress: No planned activities were scheduled for the reporting period under this output.

4. **Output 4:** Improved mechanism(s) for active engagement of communities in restoration and protection of Wadi Gaza, with a special focus on women and youth.

   Progress: Under activity 4.2: A series of four workshops were organized, involving the local community and its leaders (1 workshop for the overall community, and 3 workshops for community leaders). UNDP established five committees across the five designated municipalities, considering factors such as gender, age, disability, and residential location. These committees were primarily tasked to gather feedback from the communities and to shape the project's activities during the stages of design, planning, and execution. A total of 90 individuals participated, comprising 35 members from the local community committees and 55 from the broader local community. The participants' distribution consisted of 40% women and 60% men.

5. **Output 5:** Enhanced integration of clean energy solutions in the development of Wadi Gaza Natural Park operation, with a special focus on the engagement of women.

   Progress: No planned activities were scheduled for the reporting period under this output.

Recruitment of the Project Team:
The process of assembling the project team commenced with the selection and appointment of a dedicated civil engineer. Subsequently, an announcement was made to initiate the recruitment process for the project manager position. In July 2023, a new project manager was hired to fill this role. It is important to note that the project has been overseen by a project manager recruited for the "Towards Green Gaza" project, with direct supervision provided by the Environment Portfolio Manager. Additional staff will be recruited in 2024 according to the progress of project activities.

Brief description of the management of identified risk factors, including financial irregularities, so far in the project. Describe any new risk factors which have been identified, and how these will be managed during the next period.

During the reporting period, the primary risks were related to the delayed finalization of the embankment design, thus postponing infrastructure works originally planned for 2023. To minimize the impact of the delay, UNDP, as soon as the Wadi Gaza boundaries are finalised and handed over by the de-facto authorities, will assign the construction workload to multiple contractors simultaneously. This measure aims to ensure efficiency and timely completion of the different activities of the project.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the project encountered minor delays due to an escalation in May 2023 in the Gaza Strip.

The redesign process for the embankment is considered a potential risk that needs to be monitored closely in coordination with the MoLG and other stakeholders.

Additionally, UNDP will ensure the finalisation of an updated design that incorporates all significant topographical alterations in the Wadi since 2018 and the modifications made to the Wadi's boundaries. By incorporating these factors and making a thorough review of the planned structure, the resulting embankment design is expected to be more environmentally friendly and aligned with the evolving requirements of the project stakeholders. The requirements include coordination with relevant parties at each step, as well as GEDCO requirements for on-ground services such as electrical infrastructure needed for the project, fulfilling various design requirements requested from MoLG, obtaining EQA permits for any works in the Wadi, such as greening, construction of

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embankments etc. In addition to LA's requirements to get Wadi Gaza boundaries that is essential for embankments' design.

The re-scheduling of the greening activity is an important adaptation measure, advancing implementation after the encountered delay in the implementation of first-year activities.

Brief description of the project's effects on gender equality, human rights, and the environment and climate change so far. (If relevant, describe briefly how the intentions of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on women and peace and security are taken into account.)

The project has largely contributed to addressing gender equality, human rights, as well the environmental and social aspects, as follows:

- **Community Engagement and Gender Inclusion:** This activity includes developing a communication strategy. The strategy considered the best integration of gender equality in all parts of the communication strategy. This activity also includes community consultations aimed at validating the proposed project implementation approach. The communication strategy focuses on behavioural change and increasing awareness and knowledge about climate change, biodiversity, and environmental challenges specifically for Wadi Gaza. It's important to mention that this gender-inclusive communication strategy was created by an expert woman in gender and communication.

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4. The project's progress and results achievement

4.1 The project's goal hierarchy with preliminary results

Describe the results obtained during the reporting period, based on the goal hierarchy in the application. Reporting on the products/services (outputs) delivered is required, and, if possible, the report should also indicate the project's effect on the target group (outcome) so far. The goal hierarchy with preliminary results may be provided in a separate attachment to the report. The results and activities should be numbered in order to show the link between the levels (i.e. outcome 1, output 1.1, activity 1.1.1, 1.1.2, etc.)

DEVELOPMENT GOAL (INTENDED *IMPACT ON* SOCIETY)	Results (indicators if relevant)	Comments
Impact: Strengthened socio-economic resilience of the Palestinian people, including greater self-reliance, enhanced ownership and leadership, and cohesive identity		

No.	PROJECT GOAL, EFFECT ON THE TARGET GROUP (INTENDED *OUTCOME)*	Indicators	Results	Comments
	Improved climate-resilient management of and equitable access to natural resources, including renewable energy			

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No.	PRODUCTS AND SERVICES (PLANNED *OUTPUTS)*	Results (indicators if relevant)	Results	Comments
	Improved institutional capacities of the JSC-WG and targeted municipalities in gender-responsive and sustainable ecosystem management of Wadi Gaza, including engagement of private sector	1.1 Number and type of eco-friendly[1] operational resources provided to JSC-WG for the management of Wadi Gaza **Target for year (1): 0** 1.2 Progress on implementing the identified required operational plans disaggregated by milestones achieved. **Target for year (1): 0** 1.3 Percentage of operational plans implemented which are gender responsive. **Target for year (1): 0%** 1.4 A strategy for ecotourism PPPs is developed and operationalized (binary indicator: yes/no) **Target for year (1): No** 1.5 A business model and sustainability plan has been developed (binary indicator: yes/no) **Target for year (1): No**	**Result 1.1 for Year (1): 0** **Result 1.2 for Year (1): 0** **Result 1.3 for Year (1): 0%** **Result 1.4 for Year (1): No** **Result 1.5 for Year (1): No**	
	Enhanced integration of gender-sensitive solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation in the Wadi Gaza operation, including biodiversity protection	2.1 Number of solutions for climate change adaptation* implemented in Wadi Gaza (disaggregate gender-sensitive/neutral) **Target for year (1): 1** 2.2 Length (in km) of embankment implemented in Wadi Gaza **Target for year (1): 0.5km** 2.3 Area (in dunums) cultivated with climate-resilient plants. **Target for year (1): 0**	**Result 2.1 for Year (1): 0** **Result 2.2 for Year (1): 0 km.** **Result 2.3 for Year (1): 0**	The embankment is a solution to adapt the climate change, but it is still under design.

[1] **Environment friendly:** requires the inclusion of solutions and/or materials which increase energy efficiency in operation and/or are made of environment friendly materials.

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	Improved gender friendly ecotourism infrastructure in Wadi Gaza, including with private sector engagement	3.1 Number of ecotourism facilities constructed in Wadi Gaza **Target for year (1): 0** 3.2 Length (in km) of green pedestrian walkway implemented in Wadi Gaza **Target for year (1): 0** 3.3 Percentage of ecotourism facilities constructed which are gender friendly. **Target for year (1): 0** 3.4 Number of identified and established PPPs for the maintenance/operation of the Wadi Gaza facilities **Target for year (1): 0**	**Result 3.1 for Year (1): 0** **Result 3.2 for Year (1): 0** **Result 3.3 for Year (1): 0** **Result 3.4 for Year (1): 0**	
	Improved mechanism(s) for active engagement of communities in restoration and protection of Wadi Gaza, with a special focus on women and youth	4.1 An active* feedback/grievance mechanism is in place. **Target for year (1): 0** 4.2 Number of community members engaged in the planning design and/or implementation of at least one activity disaggregated by age, sex and disability status. **Target for year (1): 300** 4.3 Number of community members who became Green Advocates in their communities, disaggregated by age, sex and disability status. **Target for year (1): 0**	**Result 4.1 for Year (1): 0** **Result 4.2 for Year (1): 90 (60% females)** **Result 4.3 for Year (1): 0**	- 4 workshops were conducted with the local community and its leaders (1 community, 3 community leaders). UNDP created five committees in the 5 targeted municipalities based on gender, age, disability, and geographical location of their residence. These committees' main purpose was to provide feedback of the local community in the design, planning, and implementation of project activities. 90 persons participated (35 local community committees, and 55 local community), (40% women, 60% men).

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	Enhanced integration of clean energy solutions in the development of Wadi Gaza Natural Park operation, with a special focus on the engagement of women	5.1 Number of Kilowatts of new clean energy capacity installed in the Wadi Gaza. **Target for year (1): 0** 5.2 Percentage of entire electricity consumption in Wadi Gaza Natural Park derived from renewable energy sources. **Target for year (1): 0%** 5.3 Percentage of employed electrical engineers who are females. **Target for year (1): 0**	**Result 5.1 for Year (1): 0** **Result 5.2 for Year (1): 0%** **Result 5.3 for Year (1): 0%**	

4.2 The project's implementation plan with status (and, if relevant, details for next reporting period)

Based on the approved implementation plan, indicate actual (start and) end dates. Deviations from the approved plan should be explained in the comments field. Details for the next reporting period should be included if relevant. (It is not necessary to include all activities reported in previous reporting periods, for these, reporting on output-level is sufficient.) The implementation plan with status may be provided in a separate attachment to the report.

No.	RESULTS (OUTPUTS)	Responsible	Planned start date	Planned end date	Actual start date	Actual end date	Comments
1.	**Output 1: Improved institutional capacities of the JSC-WG and targeted municipalities in gender-responsive and sustainable ecosystem management of Wadi Gaza including engagement of private sector**						
1.1	Technical Assistance for JSC-WG	UNDP/PAPP	January/2024	September/2025			
1.2	Operation Cost for JSC-WG	UNDP/PAPP	January/ 2024	December/2025			
2.	**Output 2: Enhanced integration of gender-sensitive solutions for climate change adaptation and mitigation in the Wadi Gaza operation, including biodiversity protection**						
2.1	Greening and Landscaping of the beds and sides of Wadi Gaza	UNDP/PAPP, UNDP, JSC-WG	March/2024	May/2025	July/2023		Planned originally to start in 2024. However, it will be started in the Q4 of 2023.
2.2	Embankments including green trail	UNDP/PAPP, UNDP, JSC-WG	January/2023	September/2025	December/2022		The design is ongoing and expected to be completed by October 2023.
3.	**Output 3: Improved gender-friendly ecotourism infrastructure in Wadi Gaza, including private-sector engagement**						
3.1	Development of the Wadi utilities and facilities	UNDP/PAPP, UNDP, JSC-WG	January/2025	December/2025			
3.2	Development of green pedestrian walkway (Trail)	UNDP/PAPP, UNDP, JSC-WG	January/2025	October/2025			
4.	**Output 4: Improved mechanism(s) for active engagement of communities in the restoration and protection of Wadi Gaza, with a special focus on women and youth**						
4.1	Community Engagement and Gender Inclusion	UNDP/PAPP, UNDP, JSC-WG	March/2023	June/2025	March/2023		
5.	**Output 5: Enhanced integration of clean energy solutions in the development of Wadi Gaza Natural Park operation, with a special focus on the engagement of women**						
5.1	Solar Lightening of the Wadi Gaza Path	UNDP/PAPP, UNDP, JSC-WG	January/2024	December/2025			

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5. Financial Overview

The detailed financial report and (if relevant) detailed budget for the next period must be provided in a separate attachment. The financial report should include project accounts with related explanations and must be presented according to the same structure and elements as in the approved detailed budget. The financial report must be confirmed by the person being responsible for financial matters in the grant recipient's organization.

	1- Approved total budget	2-Total charged as expenses	3-Approved budget for the period	4-Total charged as expenses for the period	Variance (3) – (4)	(4) in % of (3)	Budget for next period
	(2022-2025)	(1/12/2022 - 31/05/2025)	(1/12/2022- 30/11/2023)	(1/12/2022 - 31/05/2025)			(state period)
Project expenses – grant recipient Costs directly related to the implementation of the project	5,608,650.00	0.00	831,600.00	0.00	831,600.00	0.00%	
Project expenses – cooperating partner(s) Costs directly related to the implementation of the project	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00%	
Overheads The organization's *indirect* administrative costs related to the implementation of the project	1,302,779.00	13,854.45	157,047.12	13,854.45	143,192.67	8.82%	
Total expenses	**6,911,429.00**	**13,854.45**	**988,647.12**	**13,854.45**	**974,792.67**	**1.40%**	
- Grant recipient's own financial contribution and contributions from other sources (mark the amounts with minus signs)							
Grant from MFA	**6,911,429.00**	**13,854.45**	**988,647.12**	**13,854.45**	**974,792.67**	**1.40%**	

Notes:

- It is important to highlight that the financial figures in this report are temporary figures and may be corrected at a later stage due to exchange rate fluctuations, realized gain/loss or any other possible corrections.
- UNDP is engaged in the procurement process for greening activity, with imminent financial commitments expected. Also, as part of supporting the JSC-WG operational capacities, the manufacturing and supplying of solid waste containers for the Wadi is currently in the procurement process, The estimated cost of these activities is 157,000 US$. Additionally, the development of the full design package for the embankment will be initiated following obtaining the Wadi's boundaries.
- Total disbursement until August 2023 is 103,949 US$.

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Disbursement request for next period (to be stated in semi-annual instalments)	-

Justification/comment

Status of applications/grants from other sources

The Belgium Project "Towards a Green Gaza": The activity of cleaning Wadi Gaza is completed, and the first package of greening of Wadi Gaza is started in May 2023 to plant about 3600 trees over 42,000 m2.

The Japanese JSB Project: The design of a green and eco-friendly building including a solar power system was completed and tendered, as well as the design of the embankment is ongoing, and it is expected to be constructed at the end of March 2024.

6. Additional information

Any other information of relevance for the report

1. Some Photo's from the field



Image 1: Topographical survey of the Wadi Gaza as preparation for the design of the embankments.

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Image 2: Diagnostic visit of UNDP with the consultant and JSC-WG for the western side of the Wadi to facilitate embankment design.



Image 3: UNDP with the consultant and JSC-WG physical review of the embankments' design.

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Image 4: Monitoring visit from MFA with UNDP to the Wadi



Image 5: Wadi Gaza flood protection workshop - conducted by UNDP.

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7. Attachments

Tick the boxes below if attached, and give each attachment a number. Any other attachment should also be listed.

Attached	Number	Attachment
☒		**Detailed financial report and, if relevant, detailed budget for the next period (mandatory)**
☐		Additional cooperating partners (only when changes)
☐		Protocols for procurements and/or disposals effectuated during the reporting period (if relevant)
☐		Goal hierarchy with preliminary results
☐		Implementation plan with status
☐		
☐		
☐		
☐		
☐		

8. Date and confirmation

I am authorized to sign legally binding agreements on behalf of the grant recipient and confirm that the information contained in this report is correct to the best of my knowledge.

Place and date	Name and signature
18-Sep-2023	DocuSigned by: Sarah Poole A9CDE7A01228453... **Sarah Poole** **Special Representative of the Administrator**

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UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME