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## “Transboundary Wastewater Pollution Control Project # “102692”

Ref No.: RFP-2020-PAL-97011

# Final Evaluation Report

FINAL

Submitted to: UNDP

September 5, 2020

***Disclaimer:** This document was prepared as part of the agreement signed on 11 May 2020 with UNDP for the purpose of conducting an independent final evaluation of the Transboundary Wastewater Pollution Control Project. The authors' views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the views of UNDP.*

## List of Abbreviations

HRBA	:	Human Rights Based Approach
IWA	:	Israeli Water Authority
LG	:	Local Governments
O&M	:	Operation and Maintenance
M&E	:	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoH	:	Ministry of Health
MoLG	:	Ministry of Local Governance
NPA	:	National Policy Agenda
NRO	:	Netherlands Representative Office
OECD	:	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PM	:	Project Manager
PNA	:	Palestinian National Authority
PMO	:	Prime Minister Office
PSC	:	Project Steering Committee
PWA	:	Palestinian Water Authority
RWUs	:	Regional Water Utilities
SDP	:	National Water Sector Strategic Plan and Action Plan
ToC	:	Theory of Change
ToR	:	Terms of Reference
UNDAF	:	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Program
UNDP/PAPP	:	Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People
UNEG	:	United Nations Evaluation Group

USD : United States Dollar

WWTP : Wastewater Treatment Plant

WSRC : Water Sector Regulatory Council

## Table of Contents

List of Abbreviations .....	2
Project and Evaluation Information Details .....	5
1 Executive Summary .....	6
2 Evaluation Rationale, and Methodology .....	11
2.1 Background .....	11
2.2 Rationale and Objectives of the Evaluation .....	11
2.3 Evaluation Criteria .....	12
2.4 Evaluation Questions .....	12
2.5 Evaluation Methodology .....	13
3 Project Description and Timeline .....	14
3.1 Project Description .....	14
3.2 Project Theory of Change (ToC) .....	15
3.3 Project Timeline .....	17
4 Evaluation Analysis, and Interpretation .....	20
4.1 Relevance .....	20
4.2 Effectiveness .....	29
4.3 Efficiency .....	37
4.4 Sustainability .....	41
5 Learning and Recommendations .....	45
6 Annexes .....	49
6.1 Annex A: ToR of the Assignment .....	50
6.2 Annex B: Evaluation Matrix .....	51
6.3 Annex C: List of Reviewed Documents .....	56
6.4 Annex D: List of Interviews and Focus Groups .....	57

## Project and Evaluation Information Details

Project/outcome Information		
<b>Project/outcome title</b>	Transboundary Wastewater Pollution Control Project	
<b>Atlas ID</b>	99404/102692	
<b>Corporate outcome and output</b>	Increased access to water and wastewater services and control wastewater pollution	
<b>Country</b>	State of Palestine	
<b>Region</b>	Middle East	
<b>Date project document signed</b>	10 December 2017	
<b>Project dates</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Planned end</b>
	1 January 2018	30 June 2020
<b>Project budget</b>	USD 6,303,964	
<b>Project expenditure at the time of evaluation</b>		
<b>Funding source</b>	Netherland	
<b>Implementing party<sup>1</sup></b>	UNDP	

Evaluation information		
<b>Evaluation type (project/outcome/thematic/country programme, etc.)</b>	Project	
<b>Final/midterm review/other</b>	Final	
<b>Period under evaluation</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>End</b>
	1 January 2018	30 June 2020
<b>Evaluators</b>	General Consulting and Training (GCT)	
<b>Evaluator email address</b>	Info@General-Gct.Com	
<b>Evaluation dates</b>	<b>Start</b>	<b>Completion</b>
	19 May 2020	8 July 2020

<sup>1</sup> It is the entity that has overall responsibility for implementation of the project (award), effective use of resources and delivery of outputs in the signed project document and workplan.

## 1 Executive Summary

On 11 May 2020, the United Nations Development Program/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP) commissioned an independent final evaluation for the “Transboundary Wastewater Pollution Control Project” -referred to as the Project.

This report presents the findings of the evaluation exercise with the aim to generate constructive discussion among the Project partners including UNDP/PAPP, national ministries, and local authorities to generate knowledge, identify best practices and lessons learned that could inform and guide future interventions. The report aims at presenting the evaluation analyses and findings to the Project management, UNDP/PAPP, as well as to relevant stakeholders and partners.

As stipulated in the ToR of the assignment, the final evaluation focused on assessing the governance structure of the project, whether the project set up leads to the desired result by measuring to what extent the objective/outputs/activities have been achieved against the results and resources, based on the scope and criteria included in the assignment ToR. The final evaluation focused as much as possible on the strategic political aspects of the Project, the sustainability of the results generated, and commitments for the future with respect to transboundary wastewater management and money deducted by Israel to cover the cost of the treatment.

More importantly, the evaluation followed international norms and standards and ethical guidelines related to evaluating development projects and programs. These guidelines included the “UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring and Evaluating for Development projects”, and the OECD/DAC criteria. Standard evaluation criteria that were assessed included: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability; Relevance focused on the appropriateness of the Project to local context and the needs and interest of the local population and communities as well as UNDP/PAPP and donor strategies, while effectiveness tried to answer the question of what was the level of achievement of the different expected outputs, outcomes and what were the major bottlenecks that were faced and may continue to face the implementation of the Project. For efficiency we looked at the extent to which resources/inputs have led to the intended results and to what extent it was cost-effective. Finally, Sustainability referred to examining the probability of the Project effects to continue in the long term, and what are the specific elements that were included in the design and implementation of the Project that could improve the sustainability of the interventions.

### ***The findings of the evaluation can be summarized as follows:***

In terms of **relevancy**, the Project is fully aligned with the national strategies and priorities. the various components of the project contribute to improving the wastewater services at the local level, by supporting the needed infrastructure (e.g. wastewater networks, pumping station, flow meters) of marginalized, border-line communities; as well as by raising the

capacity and awareness of these communities to better manage and finance wastewater services. More importantly, the project was exceptional in helping PWA to improve its capacity and understanding of wastewater transboundary realities, concerns, and options. Despite it not being one of the focus areas, the Project contributes indirectly to the national reform agenda of the restructuring of water and wastewater services providers and establishing Regional Water Utilities (RWUs). The capacity development and the improvement of wastewater assets and services of the benefited local governments (LGs) is considered by MoLG and other stakeholders as the building block toward reforming the water and wastewater sector. Discussion with UNDP staff confirmed the relevancy of the project to UNDP strategy and the plan for building on lessons learned from this project/phase for informing the design of the future interventions/phases. To a large extent, the planning, design, and implementation of the Project took into account the views, needs, and priorities of the targeted communities, the main national partner (i.e. PWA), and other stakeholders. Several participatory tools and approaches were utilized during the design and implementation of the Project including consultation meetings, regular meetings of the Project Technical Committee (i.e. monthly) and Project Steering Committee (e.g. biannual), and full engagement of PWA in all aspects of the project design and implementation. This consultation process ensured better alignment of different activities with the needs of the target groups and end beneficiaries. Gender aspects and Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) were mainstreamed throughout the Project design, and implementation.

In terms of **effectiveness**: The information that the evaluation team collected from the field visits, Focus Groups (FGs) discussions with the municipal and village councils in the targeted communities as well as the reports provided by UNDP, enabled the team to confirm that the wastewater collection systems (the remaining of Baqa Al-Sharqia, Nazlat Issa, An-Nazla Al-Sharqia, An-Nazla Alwesta, An-Nazla Al-Gharibia and Zeita) have been completed. A total of around 30 km of the collection system has been implemented in Nazlat Issa, Zeita and Baqa Al-Sharqia, An-Nazla Alwesta and An-Nazla Al-Gharibia. This figure is exceeding the planned length by 2 kilometres. Around 14,500 people benefit from the implementation of the wastewater collection systems. The two pumping stations (at Zeita and Nazlat Issa) are also completed. Inspection, and testing are completed. The Evaluation team was informed by UNDP that the tariff and revenue collection system for Baqa Al-Sharqia, Zeita, An-Nazla Alwesta, An-Nazla Al-Gharibia, Nazlat Issa and An-Nazla Al Sharqia was prepared, reviewed and cleared. These tariffs were partially implemented in Zeita and Baqa Alsharqiya in spite that the tariff was not submitted to the Prime Minister Office (PMO) for endorsement as regulated in the Water Law. The awareness campaign and training on financial, operation and maintenance (O&M), and the community awareness on water and wastewater management were conducted by a local NGO. At the time of drafting this report, the preparation of the position paper is still ongoing and hasn't been finalized. Two flowmeters in Wadi Zumer were installed in order to measure the volumetric wastewater flowing down stream towards the Israeli side, two flowmeters were installed in Qalqilya and one implemented in Bir Nabala.

What has been achieved would pave the way for the residents of these communities to benefit of an environmentally sound wastewater service. For these communities to have access to this service, households in these communities must be connected to the main sewers.

One of the main factors of ineffectiveness is the reliance of UNDP on a letter of commitment from the served communities to pay for the house connections cost. Perhaps UNDP should have insisted to collect the community contribution before the start of the project. The reluctance of the village councils to assume their role in collecting the household contribution for the cost of households' connections contributed to the ineffectiveness because without the household connections to the main sewers in An-Nazlat, the access of residents to the wastewater services is not achieved.

In terms of the political elements of the transboundary (e.g. position paper, and contract specific agreements), the main constraining factors that have hindered the achievement of these outputs are lack of trust between the Israeli and Palestinian side on one hand and the absence of political will due to the unilateral actions taken by Israelis regarding the peace process. Perhaps, trilateral efforts (Israeli-Palestinian-Dutch) could have helped overcome this situation.

The evaluation team concluded that the resources have been used efficiently to achieve the planned project's results. When possible, the Project tried to maximize the use of available and limited resources in delivering different activities which is a positive indication of the **efficiency** of the Project. Despite the number of uncertainties in the political environment, nearly all planned activities were achieved within the planned budget. The slight modification in the plans (e.g. the pressurized collection line in Zeita and the accompanying pumping station) were implemented by reallocation of funds originally budgeted for other activities and a top up of 400,000 USD. The management structure of the Project was found to be adequate and suitable in generating the expected results. In addition, the open and transparent bidding process for the various planned activities in the project, that included the PWA in addition to UNDP and local authorities' councils, enabled UNDP to get the best cost-effective offers for these activities. The Project monitoring and reporting followed UNDP's programming policies and procedures and included: weekly meetings, site engineers reporting and supervisions, risk monitoring during the annual planning process, annual progress reports, and site visits and missions by UNDP and the donor.

The delivery of funds and activities vary from one output to another. Except for few exceptions, activities planned under outputs 1 and 3 were implemented on time and within the planned budget. Activities planned under Outputs 2 and 4 witnessed considerable delay and some of them are still pending. The lack of trust between the Palestinian and Israeli sides and almost absence of political will, have resulted in delays in finalizing and signing the site-specific agreements between PWA and IWA (output 2). The same reasons have resulted in



the delay of the draft position paper and endorsing accepted mechanism for the management of transboundary wastewater issues (output 4).

The assessment of the **sustainability** aspects of the Project led to mixed results. On one hand, the wastewater network should provide a sustainable solution for wastewater collection and disposal for the local communities. The training on O&M, and costing is expected to contribute to enhancing the capacities of the targeted LGs to ensure the sustainability of wastewater services. At the national/strategic level the installed flow meters will improve the PWA capacity to monitor and quantify the amount of wastewater that crosses the Green Line. This should strengthen the position and ability of PWA to manage transboundary wastewater, and accurately verify the quantities and invoices received from the Israeli side regarding transboundary wastewater. On the other hand, the uncompleted activities of the project house connections, adoption of tariff structure, and the infrastructure handover process might risk the sustainability of the project results in case no follow up or exit strategy were put in place.

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic was another factor that influenced both the effectiveness and sustainability of the project. Since March 2020, the Palestinian Government declared emergency status and imposed lockdown measures on Palestinian communities. These measures affected the ability of the Project to implement certain activities such as the refresher training to localities, and the handover process of flow meters and other infrastructure. In addition, the Palestinian government decided to suspend the subsidy to cover 50% of the cost of household connections which delayed the completion of household connections. The incompleteness of the household connection and the tariff system approval is affecting the sustainability of these outputs after the project end. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the PA has been hesitant to push for approvals of new tariff system to avoid imposing additional pressure on the citizens of marginalized communities.

Another important event that took place during the last months of the project was the plan of the Israeli Government to annex the Jordan Valley and other areas of the West Bank. This plan -although it is not clear if it will be implemented- has impacted the overall political environment and affected the PA attitude toward improving the relations with the Israeli side including improving wastewater transboundary arrangement through signing site specific contracts between the Palestinian communities and Israeli Authorities. Due to this reason, the PA was not in favor for advancing of the site-specific contracts between the project targeted communities and the Israeli side, which added to the mistrust between the two sides. It is expected that the relations and cooperation between the two sides will continue to be challenging in the short term which requires the intervention of a third neutral party (The Government of Netherlands for example) to facilitate discussion and agreement between the two sides through the trilateral committees/negotiations.

For both UNDP and PWA the Project is part of an overall program to enhance transboundary wastewater management which started in 2009 with a Japanese funding, and then continued through Dutch funding from 2014 to date. To maintain the momentum of previous phases/efforts, UNDP has developed a concept for the next phase and discussed it with the NRO. Just before the start of the COVID-19 crisis, the Netherlands gave the initial approval on the concept of the next phase for USD 5.0 million. However, due to the global pandemic emergency, the Dutch government put on hold the development aid including the fund for the next phase. The faith of the next phase is still uncertain, and UNDP is maintaining the dialogue with various partners on this regard.

At the end of the report **learning and recommendations** are provided to inform the design and implementation of future interventions based on lessons learned and the experience of this Project.

## 2 Evaluation Rationale, and Methodology

### 2.1 Background

On 11 May 2020, the United Nations Development Program/Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (UNDP/PAPP) commissioned an independent final evaluation for the “Transboundary Wastewater Pollution Control Project” -referred to as the Project.

This Evaluation Report is the conclusion of all fieldwork and data collection that took place during the past weeks. This report is considered to be the final deliverable of the assignment and aims at presenting the evaluation analyses and findings to the Project management, UNDP, as well as to relevant stakeholders and partners.

The evaluation approach is participatory thus encouraging stakeholder involvement. This approach is based on the belief that the more responsive the design of any development intervention is to the needs of those it intends to serve, the greater the positive impact of the intervention will be. The evaluation approach built on the standards of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development / Development Assistance Committee OECD/DAC in addition to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation, and the Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation – Towards UNEG Guidance.

This report includes an executive summary; the evaluation rationale, purpose, specific objectives, and methodology used; description of the Project, and its context; evaluation analysis and interpretation; and learning and recommendations. Additional annexes are also included at the end of the report.

### 2.2 Rationale and Objectives of the Evaluation

As stipulated in the ToR of the assignment, the final evaluation focused on assessing the governance structure of the project, whether the project set up leads to the desired result by measuring to what extent the objective/outputs/activities have been achieved against the results and resources, based on the scope and criteria included in the assignment ToR. The final evaluation focused as much as possible on the strategic political aspects of the Project, the sustainability of the results generated, and commitments for the future with respect to transboundary wastewater management and money deducted by Israel to cover the cost of the treatment.

More specifically, the final evaluation looked at the following aspects:

1. Assessing the project’s performance through measuring its relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and other cross cutting evaluation issues;
2. Determining the extent to which the project’s objectives/outputs/activities have been achieved against the available resources and time framework;

3. Addressing the gaps and highlighting challenges in achieving the desired results and outcomes;
4. Analysing the processes, efficiency of used model/practices/strategies, the effectiveness of project ( to what extent the implemented activities has obtained the expected outcomes) and assessment of the monitoring and evaluation tools of the project as well as the learning processes, relations with relevant stakeholders, and other aspects of the Project governance;
5. Assessing and appraising the potential sustainability of dynamics generated among partners, and commitments for the future;
6. Identifying and highlighting lessons learned, best practices, challenges faced, and providing recommendations as needed for development similar future interventions.

The ToR of the assignment is included in Annex A.

### 2.3 Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation followed the internationally adopted OECD/DAC norms, standards and ethical guidelines for conducting reviews and evaluations. Accordingly, the analyses were grouped according to the criteria to be used in evaluating the Project. These criteria included:

- **Relevance:** The extent to which the objectives of the Project are consistent with the needs and interest of the targeted communities, the needs of the country, the UNDP related strategies and the donor priorities.
- **Efficiency:** Extent to which resources/inputs (funds, time, human resources, etc.) have been turned into results.
- **Effectiveness:** Extent to which the objectives of the development intervention have been achieved.
- **Sustainability:** Probability of the benefits of the intervention continuing in the long term.
- Cross-cutting issues including: **Human rights, and gender equality.**

### 2.4 Evaluation Questions

The ToR of the final evaluation proposed an indicative list of evaluation questions to guide the investigation of the Project. The questions were grouped under the previously mentioned OECD/DAC criteria, and additional focus areas.

The evaluation team found the proposed questions relevant and useful in linking the logic and context of the Project, in line with international best practices in project evaluation, in

particular, the standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria. Furthermore, and to make these questions more operational, the evaluation team developed an Evaluation Matrix with proposed questions, indicators, and data sources to guide the process of data collection and analyses. The Evaluation Matrix is presented in Annex B.

## 2.5 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation methodology followed a Mixed Methods (MM) approach that combined quantitative and qualitative participatory tools. These tools included:

- 1) **Systematic Review of Documentation**, including Project Document, annual progress reports, results framework, minutes of meeting of the Project Steering Committee, various outputs of the Project (e.g. draft position paper, and public awareness activity final report). Relevant documentation from national and local partners were also reviewed. Annex C, includes a list of key documents that were consulted for this evaluation.
- 2) **Semi-structured Interviews**: The evaluation team conducted semi-structured individual interviews with as many as possible of the Project partners. The interviews were conducted using the Evaluation Matrix that was developed in the Inception Phase. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, some of the interviews were conducted virtually (via Zoom application). A list of interviews is provided in Annex D.
- 3) **Focus Group (FG) discussion** was also organized with residents from the targeted communities. The FG complemented the findings of the interviews and the systematic review of documentation, and provided in-depth assessment of outcomes, lessons learned, gaps and obstacles encountered, and recommendations. Only one FG was possible due to the COVID-19 restrictions and included 6 residents (4 males and 2 females).
- 4) **Field Visits/Observation**: In addition to the interviews, field visits were conducted to the targeted communities and project locations. These visits allowed the evaluator to observe the status and impact of the project outputs, mainly the infrastructure component. In addition, a rapid technical inspection by the team’ Wastewater Expert was performed during these visits.

### 3 Project Description and Timeline

#### 3.1 Project Description

The Project “Transboundary Wastewater Pollution Control” is a UNDP/PAPP initiative that aims to strengthen the wastewater infrastructure in critical locations and support the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) in improving its transboundary wastewater management. The Project is funded by the Netherlands with a total budget of USD 6,708,488. The Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), and the local councils of Baqa Al-Sharqieh, Zeita and Nazlat (Nazlat Issa, An-Nazla Al-Sharqia, An-Nazla Alwesta, and An-Nazla AL-Gharibia) are the key partners of the Project.

The Project is a continuation of a previous similar project that was funded by the Government of Japan and implemented by UNDP between 2009 and 2013. This Project was divided into two connected phases: Phase 1 consisted of a feasibility study which was conducted by UNDP and financed by the Netherlands in 2014-2015; While Phase 2 (this project and the subject of the evaluation) consisted of the construction of wastewater systems, and capacity building activities targeting the local communities and the PWA.

The project targeted six Palestinian communities with a total population of around 14,500 capita. These include: Baqa Al-Sharqieh, Zeita and Nazlat (Nazlat Issa, An-Nazla Al-Sharqia, An-Nazla Alwesta, and An-Nazla AL-Gharibia). Prior to the Project these communities were using cesspits and were dumping raw wastewater into Wadi Abu Nar and the surrounding areas, leading to significant public health risks and a threat to the shared water aquifer. In addition, mismanagement of wastewater in these communities was causing transboundary pollution and generating conflict and tensions between Palestinians and Israelis.

According to the Project Document, the objective of the Project was to enhance transboundary wastewater management and control pollution. The attainment of this objective was done through the following outputs:

1. Residents of Baqa Al-Sharqieh, Zeita and the four Nazlat communities have increased access to wastewater services.
2. Capacities of Baqa Al-Sharqieh and Nazlat local councils to operate and maintain wastewater collection system are improved.
3. Community awareness and commitments are raised.
4. Capacity of PWA to measure and manage transboundary wastewater in different locations in the West Bank is enhanced.

The project implemented a number of activities to achieve the intended results. These activities included:

1. Installation of flowmeters in five transboundary wastewater streams.
2. Construction of wastewater networks to connect the targeted communities. In particular the remaining of Baqa Al-Sharqia, Nazlat Issa, An-Nazla Al- Sharqia, An-Nazla Alwesta, An-Nazla AL-Gharibia. In addition to that installation of a pumping station in Nazlat Issa, and Zeita with a pressurized pipeline to connect wastewater which is collected from the wastewater network of Zeita.
3. Enhancing the capacities of the targeted municipalities to ensure the sustainability of the provided wastewater services and finalizing the transboundary wastewater specific agreements through the provided training and on-the-job coaching.

### 3.2 Project Theory of Change (ToC)

As part of the evaluation process, the evaluation team reconstructed the Theory of Change (ToC) of the Project which shows the logical pathway that leads from activities to outcomes and long-term objectives. The ToC provides an explicit representation of how different project components interact, and ultimately work to deliver desired project goals. This draft ToC was used to validate and update where needed the evaluation questions originally proposed by the ToR of the assignment. The ToC responds to stakeholders’ priorities and interests for the project. The evaluation team gathered these priorities and interests through documentation analysis, interviews, focus groups, and site visits.

Interviews indicate two broad, long-term objectives for the Project: **First**, that the project supports the **protection of public health** through the **elimination of pollution** generated from lack of integrated planning and management of wastewater flows within the Palestinian communities, and between Palestine and the Israeli side (transboundary aspect); **Second**, that the project, given it is part of a phased approach, contributes to a **transparent and fair** basis for **monitoring and financing** of the **costs of wastewater** collection, transport, and treatment.

Figure 1 illustrates the ToC of the Project.

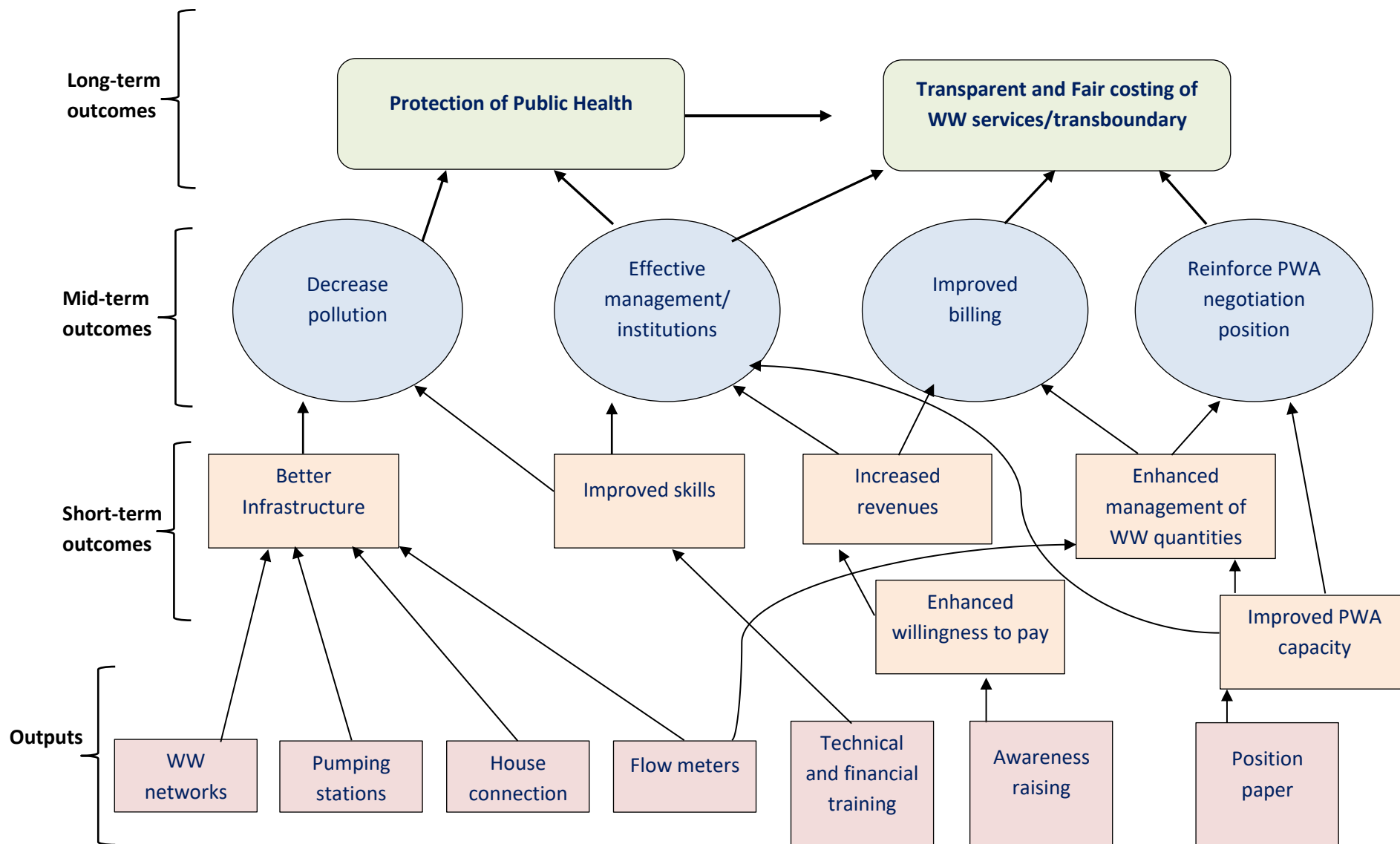


Figure 1: ToC of the Project



### 3.3 Project Timeline

The effective start date of the Project is 1 March 2018, while its end date is 30 June 2020 (including extension). The preparation of the project took place between 2014 and 2018. A feasibility study was carried out by UNDP and financed by the Netherlands between 2014-2015 and is considered the first phase of the Project.

The feasibility study aimed at proposing the most feasible and environmentally safe system to control wastewater pollution for the targeted communities and employed a multi-criteria analysis to guide the decision makers on the selection of the best option. The study concluded that the most feasible and realistic long-term option for wastewater management in the targeted communities would be the extension of wastewater networks and construction of a Wet Land wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) on a public land located between An-Nazla Al-Sharqia, and An-Nazla Alwesta. The study also concluded that due to the lack of fund to construct the proposed wastewater treatment plant and the capacity to operate it, extension of wastewater networks and connection to wastewater treatment plant in Israel should be carried out on the short term.

Following the feasibility study, the preparation for the project (i.e. phase 2) started with the focus on implementing wastewater collection system and improving capacities of Baqa Alsharqiya and Nazlat municipality<sup>1</sup> to operate and maintain the constructed wastewater facilities. In addition to supporting the PWA to enhance its capacity to monitor and quantify the wastewater that is crossing the green line into Israel from the other streams and install at least five flow meters in the most critical sites<sup>2</sup>.

The project (phase 2) was then approved and started on 1 March 2018. The original end date of the project was set for 29 Feb 2020: The project was extended twice during its life time; the first no-cost extension was for two months (from 29 Feb 2020 to 30 April 2020), and the second no-cost extension was until 30 June 2020 due to the need for little adjustment on the plan<sup>3</sup>.

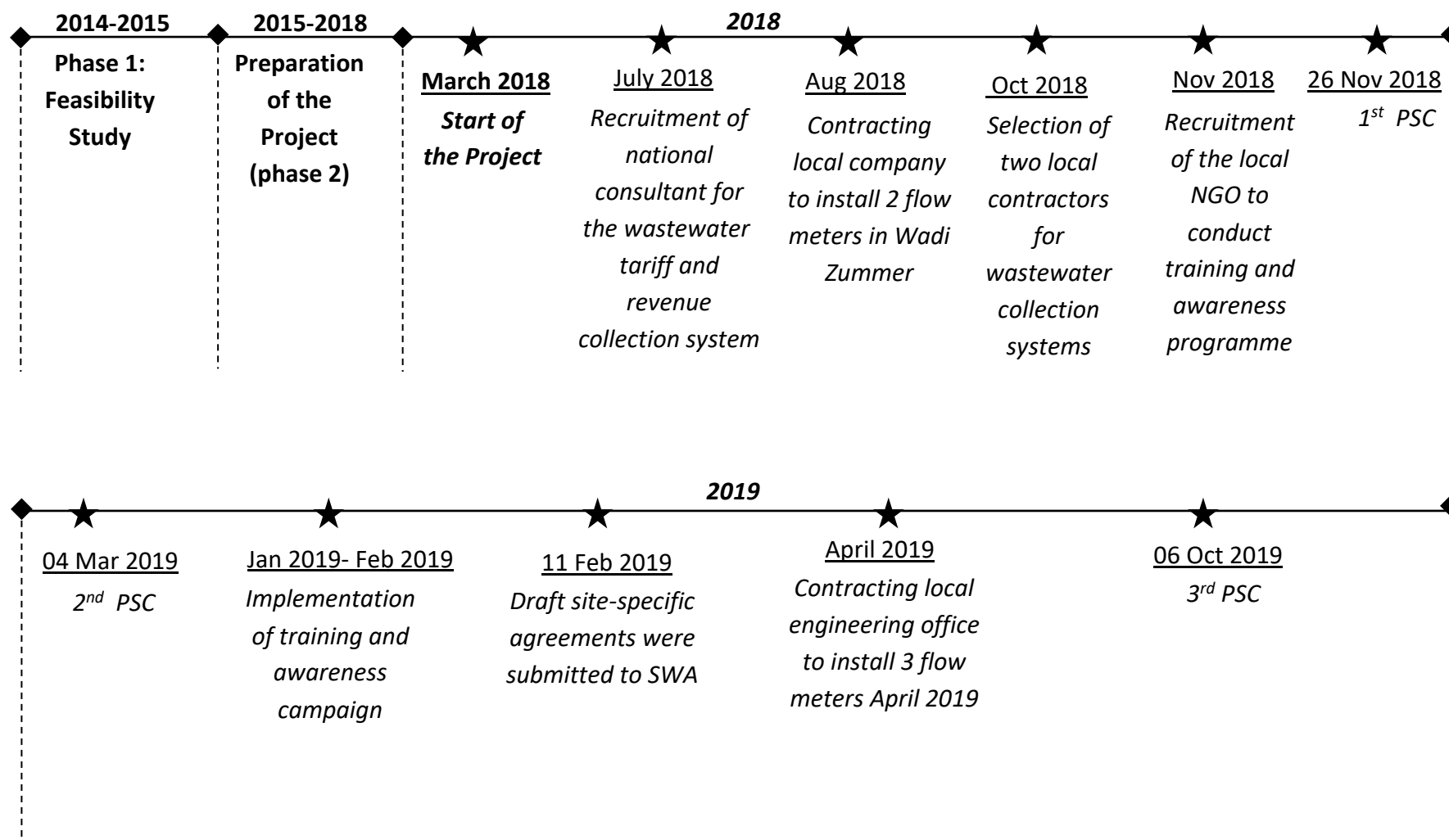
Figure 2 illustrates the main activities/milestones of the Project as constructed from document review and interviews.

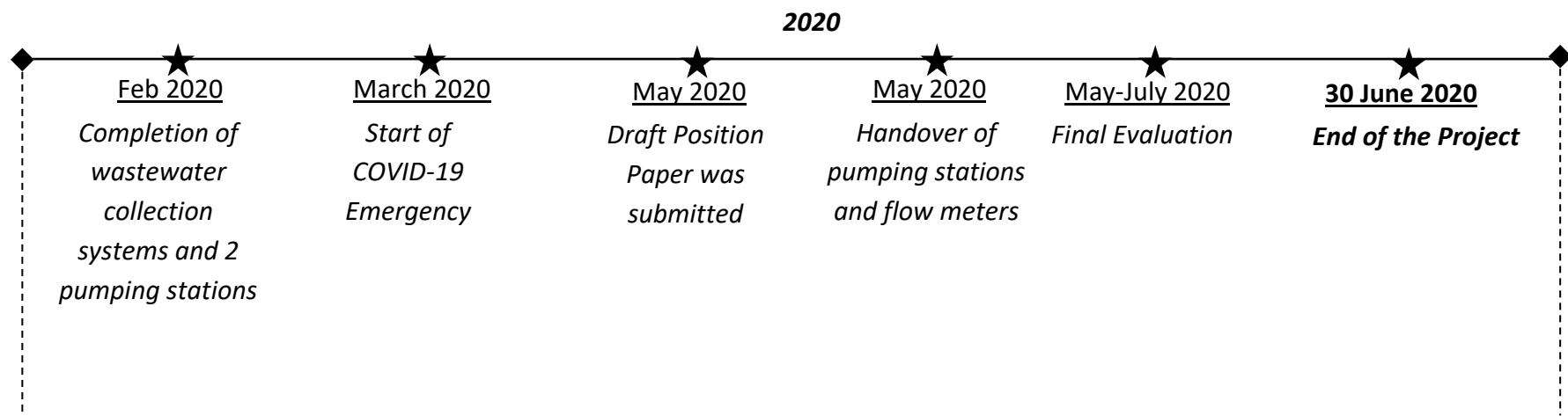
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<sup>1</sup> During the project's preparation stage Baqa Alsharqiya and Nazlat formed one municipality

<sup>2</sup> Project Document, page 5.

<sup>3</sup> Second Annual Progress Report, page 13.





**Figure 2: Project Timeline**

## 4 Evaluation Analysis, and Interpretation

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the final evaluation. This analysis is based on the data collected through the various evaluation tools, which are described in the methodology section of this report.

To remain consistent with the assignment ToR, and the Evaluation Matrix that was developed during the inception phase, this chapter is organized according to the standards of the OECD/DAC, which looks at the following criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. In addition to the cross-cutting aspects including: Human rights, and gender equality.

### 4.1 Relevance

Under the relevance the evaluation team has worked to examine and answer the following questions:

***To what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?***

The preparation of the Project coincided with the transition between the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) 'National Development Plan (NDP) 2014-2016: State Building to sovereignty', and the "National Policy Agenda (NPA) 2017-2022: Putting Citizens First". Under the 10<sup>th</sup> Policy: "Resilient Communities", the NPA set "Expanding wastewater management, treatment and reuse" as one of the main policy interventions<sup>5</sup>. This policy intervention is expected to contribute to enhancing the resilience of the Palestinian communities, by ensuring their safety and security, improving and expanding basic services, and providing a clean, healthy and sustainable environment<sup>6</sup>.

Another important national strategic document related to water and wastewater sector in Palestine is the "National Water Sector Strategic Plan and Action Plan (2017- 2022) (SDP)" which was developed by the PWA in consultation with various stakeholders in 2016. Among the main strategic objectives of the SDP is "improving wastewater services and structure (collection, treatment, and reuse)"<sup>7</sup>. Although the SDP doesn't give proper emphasize to the transboundary issues, it includes "applying the Palestinian vision regarding transboundary water"<sup>8</sup> as one of the proposed interventions to achieve the development vision of the water sector "towards an organized water and wastewater sector".

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<sup>5</sup> National Policy Agenda (NPA), page 44.

<sup>6</sup> National Policy Agenda (NPA), page 44.

<sup>7</sup> National Water Sector Strategic Plan and Action Plan (2017- 2022) -SDP, page 37.

<sup>8</sup> National Water Sector Strategic Plan and Action Plan (2017- 2022) -SDP, page 53.

The Project is fully aligned with ***the national strategies and priorities***. The various components of the project contribute to improving the wastewater services at the local level, by supporting the needed infrastructure (e.g. wastewater networks, pumping station, flow meters) of marginalized, border-line communities; as well as by raising the capacity and awareness of these communities to better manage and finance wastewater services. More importantly, the project was exceptional in helping PWA to improve its capacity and understanding of wastewater transboundary realities, concerns, and options. Interviews with stakeholders, mainly PWA, confirmed that the flow meters installed at main transboundary wastewater streams should allow PWA to better measure the flows of wastewater to the Israeli side and thus enhance the PA negotiation position with the Israeli side. The position paper developed by the Project, although it is still in a draft form, will be instrumental in helping PWA to formulate the Palestinian vision regarding transboundary water. It is important to note here that, PWA is not fully satisfied by the current draft of the position paper as *“it is more of a descriptive, academic paper”* and *“lacks the views of the consultant about the possible scenarios or position for PWA”*. This critical view of PWA, doesn't deny the fact that PWA was fully involved in the selection of the consultant, and in the consultation process during the drafting of the position paper, which was confirmed by PWA during the evaluation exercise.

It is worth to point to the potential linkage of the project to the recent PA efforts to reform water and wastewater sector. A comprehensive programme of institutional and legislative reform in the Palestinian water and wastewater sector was initiated following the endorsement for the Action Plan for Reform in 2009. The goal of the reform is to establish and activate an effective water governance system and improve the water management systems. At the core of this reform is the restructuring of water and wastewater services providers and establishing Regional Water Utilities (RWUs)<sup>9</sup>. To achieve the goal of reform, PWA and stakeholders developed, with the European Commission's support, “the “Roadmap for the Creation of Regional Water Utilities (RWUs). According to the RWUs Road Map, water and wastewater services of individual municipalities and village councils will be consolidated and then amalgamated to form Regional Water Utilities (RWUs). Although the project didn't directly support the creation of a single body to manage wastewater services in the targeted communities, the capacity development and the improvement of wastewater assets and services of the benefited local governments (LGs) was seen by MoLG and other stakeholders as the building block toward reforming the water and wastewater sector.

The Project is also consistent with the ***United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF)*** which represents the UN cooperation framework with the Government of Palestine for the period 2018-2022. More specifically, the Project strategy is in line with the UNDAF 3<sup>rd</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Roadmap for the Creation of Regional Water Utilities in the Frame of the Water Sector Reform in Palestine, April 2017, Final Phase 2 Completion Report, ORGUT Consulting AB.

Strategic priority of "Leaving no one behind: supporting sustainable and inclusive economic development"<sup>10</sup>, where the third outcome focuses on "Palestine's infrastructure and natural and cultural resources are more sustainably used and managed" including "improving the efficiency of resources management (e.g. wastewater recycling and usage)<sup>11</sup>.

Discussion with UNDP staff confirmed the relevancy of the project to UNDP strategy and the plan for building on lessons learned from this project/phase for informing the design of the future interventions/phases. UNDP looks at transboundary issues as a holistic programmatic approach and not as a stand-alone project. The recommendations and findings of this evaluation will be timely as UNDP is preparing for the next phase of the Project through Dutch funding.

The project is funded by the Government of Netherlands under its Development Cooperation Portfolio in Palestine. The overall objective of Netherland's Cooperation in Palestine is to “create a more enabling environment for conflict resolution and to realize a two-state solution in which an independent, democratic and viable Palestinian state is achieved with access to its own (natural) resources, alongside a secure, internationally recognized Israel”<sup>12</sup>. To contribute to achieving this objective, the Netherlands has been funding a number of activities in the water sector, which focus on "service delivery to marginalised and underserved communities on wastewater". The Project is coherent with the Netherland's cooperation priorities as well as the leadership role of the Netherlands as the Deputy Chair of the Water Sector Working Group. Interviews with the Netherlands Representative Office (NRO) in Ramallah, confirmed that the project objectives and components were relevant to the Netherlands priorities in Palestine. Moreover, the transboundary aspect of project is expected to remain a key priority within the support of the Netherland, in the coming years. The aim of this support is to "*build the capacity of PWA to obtain more accurate data, in order to enable Palestinians to elevate that to a more constructive discussion with the relevant water authorities in Israel, hoping to elevate that to more constructive negotiations on other issues*". For NRO, installing flow meters, is an example of tools that could lead to confidence building between the two sides.

**Relevance to SDGs:** The design and initiation of the Project overlapped with the global transition from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The new SDGs included 17 goals that were built on the success of the former MDGs. The project is strongly in conformity with the global and national efforts toward achieving the relevant SDGs. More specifically the project is aligned with SDG#1: No Poverty,

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<sup>10</sup> UNDAF, page 18.

<sup>11</sup> UNDAF, page 20.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.dutchdevelopmentresults.nl/country/palestinian-territories>

SDG#3: Good Health and Well-Being, SDG#5: Gender Equity, SDG#6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG#11 Sustainable Cities and Communities.

Table 1 lists some examples of the linkages between SDGs, and Project results and activities.

**Table 1: Linkages between SDGs and the Project**

 <p><b>1</b> NO POVERTY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project aims at increasing access to basic wastewater services for five marginalized, low income communities.</li> <li>Improving wastewater collection will reduce the cost of pumping out the sewage from cesspits for low income families.</li> <li>The development of a new tariff structure included identifying marginalised groups, and relied on the willingness to pay as identified by a special study.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>3</b> GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before the Project, local communities suffered from pollution of two artesian water wells (i.e. Nazlet Issa, and the Western well) due to improper disposal of wastewater. The pollution had severe impact on the health of residence, mainly children and women.</li> <li>Discussion with the municipality of Baqa Al-Sharqia, and Nazlet Issa council revealed that, pollution is not an issue anymore, and testing by the Ministry of Health (MoH) indicated positive results.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>5</b> GENDER EQUALITY</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gender equality is a cross cutting theme in the Project.</li> <li>The construction of wastewater collection system in the targeted communities will directly benefit 14,500 residents, where women compromise almost 50%.</li> <li>The training and awareness activities utilized gender tailored tools that targeted women and children (e.g. schools’ activities, women-only activities, women organizations, and women preachers’ meetings).</li> </ul>
 <p><b>6</b> CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The project has more direct linkages to this SDG; wastewater infrastructure, technical training on wastewater Operation and Maintenance (O&amp;M), development of tariff and costing system, and improving the capacity of PWA in managing, and planning of transboundary wastewater.</li> </ul>
 <p><b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improving wastewater services for citizens in the targeted communities should enhance the sustainability and wellbeing of these communities.</li> <li>The capacity building and training on O&amp;M, costing, financial management, etc. equipped the leadership and the technical staff with knowledge and skills necessary to have sustainable, and capable local governments.</li> </ul>

***To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects considered in the project's design?***

The Project is a continuation of a previous phase that was implemented by UNDP through funding from the Government of Japan between 2009 and 2013. In the previous phase, the

community of Baqa Al-Sharqia benefited from the construction of wastewater collection system. In addition, draft site-specific contracts between the local communities (including Baqa Al-Sharqia) were prepared during the previous phase. UNDP commissioned an independent evaluation for the previous phase where the recommendations and findings of that evaluation fed into in the design of this Project. Interviewed UNDP staff and PWA officials reported that the design of the Project was built on lessons learned from the previous phase, in particular: “(1) adopting a phasing approach, and exploring technical alternatives of wastewater disposal and treatment in any future interventions; (2) more emphasize on practical training and site visits; and (3) empower PWA to advocate for its own transboundary position and issues”<sup>13</sup>.

Following the recommendations of that evaluation, UNDP-through funding from the Netherlands- conducted a feasibility study in 2014. The feasibility study helped in determining the best options for wastewater management system for the selected communities. Through employing multi-planning criteria approach, the feasibility study identified four practical options for wastewater management in the project area. Based on that, the recommended option for wastewater management in the project area included: construction of 28 Km of wastewater collection networks, sending collected wastewater to be treated in Israel for the coming five years, and construction of wastewater treatment plant in Baqa Al-Sharqia on the long run. UNDP worked closely with PWA, NRO, and local communities to reflect these recommendations and lessons in the design of the Project. while the construction of wastewater treatment plant requires larger investment, which is not possible in the short run, the Project paved the ground for the future wastewater treatment plant by supporting the installation of pumping station and the construction of related pumping stations in Zeita and Nazlat Issa communities.

The reliance of the Project on the previous evaluation and feasibility study contributed in enhancing the appropriateness of project design and strategies to the realities on the ground and to the local needs and conditions. Nonetheless, the timing gap between the conclusion of the previous studies (2013/2014) and the start of the project (2018) had some impact on the relevancy of the project strategy due to the changes that took place between 2014 and 2018. In particular, the original design of the Project was prepared when the targeted communities were governed by one municipality that had sufficient capacity and financial resources. Once the Project was approved and initiated, the amalgamated municipality had been dismantled to one municipality (i.e.Baqa Al-Sharqia) and four smaller village councils (i.e.Nazlat Issa, An-Nazla Al- Sharqia, An-Nazla Alwesta, An-Nazla AL-Gharibia) . Another key change that befallen was the ratification of the Water law in 2014 and its amendment in 2018

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<sup>13</sup> The Final Evaluation Report of “Promote peace building through cross boundary wastewater management in the occupied Palestinian territories Project”, Sep 2013, page 46.



where the Water Sector Regulatory Council (WSRC) was given a key role in reviewing and approving any new tariff structure.

***To what extent were perspectives of those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during the project design processes?***

To a large extent, the planning, design, and implementation of the Project took into account the views, needs, and priorities of the targeted communities, the main national partner (i.e. PWA), and other stakeholders. Like most of Palestinian communities, the targeted communities were in need for proper wastewater and treatment systems. This need was compounded by the specific location of these communities where the separation wall and Israeli movement restrictions have contributed to the deterioration of all dimensions of Human Development and Security in these communities. Moreover, the unsuitable wastewater collection, disposal, and absence of wastewater treatment has led to polluting two main water wells in the area which risked the health and wellbeing of people in the area. Therefore, the representatives of the local community (i.e. the amalgamated Baqa Municipality at that time) sent an official letter to PWA asking for support to improve the environmental living conditions of the residents and enhance the cleanliness level in the area. Based on this letter, and in coordination with PWA, UNDP reached out to the Netherlands to finance the project.

Furthermore, several participatory tools and approaches were utilized during the design and implementation of the Project. During the discussion with the representatives of local communities, the evaluation team was able to confirm that local communities have been consulted during the design of the project (e.g. at the feasibility study phase), where various consultation sessions were organized with local residents by UNDP and PWA. This consultation process ensured better alignment of different activities with the needs of the target groups and end beneficiaries.

The regular meetings of the Project Technical Committee (i.e. monthly) and Project Steering Committee (e.g. biannual) allowed the local communities to express their views and concerns. Moreover, these meetings provided a suitable platform for dialogue between the different partners including PWA, MOLG, UNDP, and the local councils. It was noted that the role and engagement of MoLG could be improved in future interventions by including them in consultations regarding the projects during the project’s design phase. Large municipalities (e.g. Baqa and Zeita) reported that they were involved -to the extent possible- in the supervision of the construction of wastewater infrastructure.

PWA, as the owner/main national partner, was also involved in all aspects of the project design and implementation. Interviews with PWA revealed that, PWA is satisfied by the level of participation and consultation during the project, including in: guiding the design and planning of the project, selecting consultants and contractors (local and international), and in

adapting the activities and budget based on the realities and needs including: selecting flow meters locations, and amending the scope of the project when needed (e.g. constructing a bridge, dropping the wastewater vehicle from the budget, adding Zeita and the eastern neighbourhood to the activities, etc.).

An important aspect of project relevancy was the extensive reliance on local resources and expertise whether individuals, contractors, or consultants in delivering the different outputs and activities. For example, the design and execution of infrastructure component of the Project, and the delivery of the training, and outreach/awareness raising campaign were carried out by local qualified contractors and consultants.

The contribution of the local partners to the Project was a clear sign of ownership and commitment to the Project results. For instance, the municipality of Zeita provided the required land for the pumping station. This land (500 m<sup>2</sup>) was donated by one of the citizens. In addition, local councils provided human resources (e.g. engineers and technicians) and facilities (e.g. meeting rooms and tools) to facilitate the implementation of the Project.

***To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?***

While the Project targeted the overall population of the communities, women are among those who benefited the most from the different activities and outputs. Traditionally, women in the targeted communities are responsible for management of water supplies at the household level. During time of shortage, women have to store water, ensure water's quality and monitor hygiene practices within the household and take care of the infirm. The construction of wastewater collection system in the five communities will directly benefit a total of 14,000 residents where women comprise almost half of the total beneficiaries. It was mentioned by representatives of the local communities that prior to the Project, two main wells were contaminated by the pollution from cesspits and improper disposal of sewage. This contamination caused many diseases especially for infants and children. Women participated in the interviews and focus groups noted that, the project has improved the cleanliness levels which helped in reducing women burden related to cleaning responsibilities and reducing the burden off women's shoulders as the caretakers of the family.

Gender mainstreaming was observed throughout the training and public awareness activities. Women organizations were included as a key target group for the awareness activities; gender and culture sensitive tools were utilized during the awareness campaign such as women led preachers meetings specific to women, and the percentage of females that participated in the various activities was satisfactory given the conservative nature of the communities (23.5% females vs. 76.1% males). One of the interesting observations reported by the consultant of the training and public awareness was that women in general were more interested and aware than men about improving wastewater services and installing house connections for their households. This can be attributed to what we mentioned about women

being the caretakers of the family and that they hold a higher responsibility regarding the hygiene and wellbeing of their children and family.

The project is also aligned with Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA); Improving the access of local communities to "safe and clean drinking and sanitation" is a human right recognized by Resolution No. 64/292 of the UN General Assembly on 28 July 2010, and by the Council for Human Rights in September 2010<sup>14</sup>. Key elements of HRBA are mainstreamed in the design and implementation of the Project, including<sup>15</sup>:

- **Accessibility:** By constructing wastewater networks and pumping stations, the Project improved the accessibility of marginalized communities to better sanitation services.
- **Affordability:** the new tariff system was prepared taking into consideration the ability of citizens to pay and the affordability levels of households. A study on "willingness to pay" was conducted before the Project so that the proposed prices will be within the household affordability threshold of NIS 120.9 per household per month.

***To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional, etc., changes in the country?***

When possible, the project tried to adapt to the changing environment, and maximize the use of available resources in delivering different activities:

**Target communities:** The Project was designed under the assumption that Baqa Al-Sharqia and the four Nazlat were one large municipality. However, just before the start of the project, this one municipality was de-amalgamated into one municipality and four village councils. This new situation necessitated a different approach by the Project to deal with the four village councils that lack the capacity and human resources to support the construction of wastewater networks. The project agreed with the four local councils to jointly hire one engineer to coordinate with UNDP and the contractor. Another important change was the addition of the town of Zeita to benefit from the project. This addition was based the request of PWA since it is inked to the project scope of work, and will lead to more efficient and integrated wastewater management once the WWTP is constructed in the future. The request of PWA was approved by UNDP, and the NRO was informed of this change.

**Flow meters:** The target of the Project was to install flow meters in up to five transboundary wastewater streams. At the start of the Project, the flow meter design of five main transboundary locations were prepared (i.e. Qalqilya, Beit Jala, Wadi Surik, Wadi Al-Moqutta',

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<sup>14</sup> Resolution A/RES/64/292. United Nations General Assembly, July 2010

<sup>15</sup> HRBA and Water/sanitation, Sida, Jan 2015.

and Wadi Assamen)<sup>16</sup>, and then five flow meters were installed in coordination with PWA. Furthermore, the Project had to respond to the difficulties faced by the installation of the flow meter in Beit Jala due to the restrictions imposed by the Israeli Authorities in accessing the site and perform the installation work. Despite the efforts made by PWA for more than three months, Israel didn't grant permission to access the site. Therefore, PWA and UNDP decided to replace Beit Jala by Bir Nabala.

**Scope change:** The Project went through several scope and budget modifications to respond to the realities and needs on the ground. In all these modifications, UNDP sought the approval of PWA and consulted -when possible- with local beneficiaries. For example: (1) a wastewater vehicle and maintenance tools were part of the original budget. However, PWA decided to reallocate the vehicles and tools budget to the construction of the network due to the fact that the communities are not under one municipality any more, and these tools will not be needed for the coming five years since the wastewater network is new; (2) The project scope included "wadi crossings, wadi reinforcement, new bridge and access road for main collectors" per the recommendation of the feasibility study of 2014. However, the area benefitted of new land re-registration project (i.e. Taboo), where the proposed location for the bridge became a private property which made it impossible to build the bridge. UNDP decided to cancel the bridge in consultation with PWA, and NRO.

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<sup>16</sup> Project 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Progress Report, page 3.

## 4.2 Effectiveness

Under the effectiveness the evaluation team has worked to examine and answer the following questions:

***To what extent did the project contribute to the country programme outcomes and outputs, SDGs, the UNDP Strategic plan and national development priorities?***

The Project contributes to “Increased access to water and wastewater services of unserved communities”.

The Project outcome Indicator: Increased % of wastewater collection systems installed in the selected communities:

At the beginning of the project (baseline), only 40% of the households in Baqa Al-Sharqia were connected to wastewater network and zero (0%) of the households in the four other communities (Al Nazlat) were connected.

Baseline: 2017 (40%): inadequate wastewater management system to implement pollution control measures in Wadi Abu Nar.

Project Specific Outcome: By 2020, the five targeted communities have adopted and implemented environmentally, legally and socially sound systems to manage transboundary wastewater in Wadi Abu Nar.

Waiting for the household connection to be completed, and taking into consideration the main and secondary wastewater sewage pipelines that have been installed in Baqa Al-Sharqia, Nazlat Issa, An-Nazla Al- Sharqia, An-Nazla Alwesta, and An-Nazla AL-Gharibia, the percentage of households that will be connected to wastewater network will increase to 95% in Baqa Alsharqiya. In Al Nazlat villages the percentage of served households will become<sup>17</sup>:

- 85% of households in An-Nazla Alwesta;
- 70% in An-Nazla AL-Gharibia and An-Nazla Al- Sharqia and;
- 60% in Nazlat Issa. The Israeli Separation wall in Nazlat Issa was an obstacle that resulted in depriving the households living close to the wall of being connected to the wastewater network.

When all the households in the six targeted communities (Baqa Al-Sharqia, the four Nazlat and Zeita) are connected to the installed main sewer lines and the six communities apply the prepared tariff then evaluators can state that the targeted communities have adopted and

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<sup>17</sup> Focus group meeting with the heads of village councils of Nazlat Issa, An-Nazla Alwesta, and An-Nazla AL-Gharibia conducted on June 11, 2020.

implemented environmentally, legally and socially sound systems to manage transboundary wastewater in Wadi Abu Nar. In this context, it is important to mention that the tariff system has been prepared but not legally endorsed and not yet implemented.

***To what extent were the project outputs achieved?***

***Output 1: Residents of Baqa-Alsharqiya, Zeita and four Nazlat communities have increased access to environmentally sound municipal wastewater services.***

The information that the evaluation team collected from the field visits, FGs discussions with the municipal and village councils in the targeted communities as well as the reports provided by UNDP, enabled the team to confirm that, the wastewater collection systems (the remaining of Baqa Al-Sharqia, Nazlat Issa, An-Nazla Al-Sharqia, An-Nazla Alwesta, An-Nazla Al-Gharibia and Zeita) has been completed. A total of around 30 km of the collection system has been implemented in Nazlat Issa, Zeita and Baqa Al-Sharqia, An-Nazla Alwesta and An-Nazla Al-Gharibia. This figure is exceeding the planned length by 2 kilometers. Around 14,500 people will benefit from the implementation of the wastewater collection systems. The two pumping stations (at Zeita and Nazlat Issa) are also completed. Inspection and testing are completed. The house connections design is also completed, and UNDP received and reviewed the BOQs. It was planned to start the implementation of the house connections by early April but it was not started. To test the pumping station of Nazlat Issa, at least the households that feed the pumping station must be connected.

What has been achieved would pave the way for the residents of these communities to benefit of an environmentally sound wastewater service. For these communities to have access to this service, households in these communities must be connected to the main sewers. The declared national emergency situation as a result of COVID-19, the suspension of government promised subsidy to cover 50% of the cost of household connections and the delay in collecting the community contribution for this purpose delayed the announcement of the bidding for the household connections and has obliged the project management to perform the testing of pumping station at Nazlet Issa using fresh water until house connection is in place.

***Output 2: The Water tariff and revenue collection system for Baqa and Nazlat municipalities are reviewed, modified and implemented.***

The Evaluation team was informed by UNDP that tariff and revenue collection system for Baqa Al-Sharqia, Zeita, An-Nazla Alwesta, An-Nazla Al-Gharibia, Nazlat Issa and An-Nazla Al Sharqia was prepared, reviewed and cleared. The proposed tariff was communicated officially by PWA to the targeted municipalities and village councils with a request to start the implementation. UNDP and PWA anticipated that the deadline for the implementation will be March 2020. The information that the evaluation team collected from the FGs discussions at Baqa Alsharqiya and the four An-Nazlat confirmed this information. These tariffs were not implemented in the

four An-Nazlat and partially implemented in Baqa Al-Sharqia municipality and Zeita. The Mayors of Baqa Alsharqiya informed the evaluation team that the tariff will be implemented gradually in increments to avoid residents’ resistance and dissatisfaction. In this respect, the team would like to highlight that these tariffs were not endorsed by the Prime Minister Office (PMO) as the Water Law foresees<sup>18</sup>. The discussion of the FGs at the target communities, has shown that the municipalities and village councils are not aware of the role of WSRC in the tariff endorsement process and tariff endorsement.

The site-specific contract between PWA and the Israeli Water Authority (IWA) was prepared and submitted to IWA through the Mei Yeron corporation. The follow up was suspended based on recommendations from the head of PWA as communicated to the evaluation team.

Output 3: Training on operation and maintenance, community awareness on water and wastewater management are conducted and municipalities are equipped with necessary tools

The training on financial, operation and maintenance (O&M), community awareness on water and wastewater management were conducted by a local NGO (i.e. the House for Water and Environment (HWE)) which was contracted to implement this task. The financial training took 2 days whereas technical training took 3 days. Seventeen (17) persons were trained including 3 women. This training was assisted by a field trip to Nablus municipality and al-Najah University. Interviewees have shown satisfaction of the training and appreciated the knowledge and experience they have acquired through the training and field visits to Nablus municipality. A draft manual for O&M of wastewater networks was prepared.

Awareness campaign addressing the community in the targeted locations has been conducted. This campaign targeted the general public including women and schools’ students and included several awareness raising tools such as : lectures to housewives by religious preacher, lectures to schools’ students, posters, brochures, coasters, magnets, aprons, pencil cases, recreational day, TV spots and radio interviews. All these aimed at encouraging households’ connection to wastewater network, raise willingness to pay for the wastewater treatment cost, and changing the prevailing attitude towards the water issues and community responsibility towards environment protection.

A refresh training session was planned during 10-11 March 2020 but was postponed due to the outbreak of COVID-19.

The site-specific contract between PWA and IWA was prepared and submitted to IWA through the Mei Yeron corporation. The follow up was suspended based on recommendations from the head of PWA. PWA thinks that it would be better if the specific agreements/contracts are signed between the wastewater service provider (Municipality and village council) and Mei

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<sup>18</sup> The water law assumes that the Council of Ministers endorses water and wastewater treatment upon recommendation from the Water Sector Regulating Council (WSRC).



Yeron. When the evaluation team discussed the question of this agreement with Baqa municipality and An-Nazlat village councils, the team was informed that these councils are refusing to sign these contracts because the cost of wastewater treatment was high and they were not included in the preparation of these agreements and they think that these contracts were imposed by the Israelis. Information received from the project manager shows that it is true that the cost is high but because of that MoLG, who discussed the issue of tariff with the councils, managed to get a 50% subsidy of the cost. Further discussions with village councils made the evaluators to think that another important reason behind the reluctance is the popularism/electoral agenda of the local authority leaders.

The procurement of a wastewater vehicle and maintenance equipment wasn't implemented and no maintenance equipment was provided. The budget for the vehicle was transferred to the infrastructure construction's budget upon request by the PWA.

Output 4: Capacity of PWA in managing the transboundary wastewater in general and in possible five locations in the West Bank in particular is enhanced

At the time of drafting this report, the preparation of the position paper is still ongoing and hasn't been finalized. Sharing of data concerning wastewater volumes that cross the borders together with transparent mechanisms for the costing of wastewater treatment are needed to finalize a position paper that will lead to an accepted mechanism that will solve the question of transboundary wastewater issues between the State of Palestine and Israel.

Two flowmeters in Wadi Zumer were installed in order to measure the volumetric wastewater flowing down stream towards the Israeli side, two flowmeters are installed in Qalqilya and one implemented in Bir Nabala.

**What factors have contributed to achieving intended country programme outputs and outcomes?**

One of the main factors that have contributed to achieving intended UNDP country programme outputs is the good design of the project. This was very clear from the suitability of the proposed activities to targeted outputs. Another factor is the relevance of the project's objectives to the country programme outputs and outcomes. Engineer Adel Yassin told the evaluation team that the project proposal was done with close cooperation with the PWA. Similarly, the staff of Baqa- Al Sharqia informed the evaluation team that the project was on the agenda of the municipality strategic plan of 2017 and came to solve very serious problems regarding the environmental and groundwater wells pollution. Given that the project responds to real needs of the country and targeted communities, the PWA played an important role in getting the necessary permits for the project and it was actively engaged in supporting the project. The PWA as client and owner of the project, supported the UNDP team efforts in solving emerging obstacles and participated actively in the technical supervision of the project and follow-up with LGs in the project's localities.



### ***To what extent has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective?***

UNDP as executing agency of the project applied an inclusive partnership strategy that aimed at encouraging all stakeholders of the project to be involved actively in the project to ensure successful delivery of project's results. For this purpose, UNDP has signed exchange of letter with the PWA as water sector lead, planners and policy making agency for this sector. During the preparation of the project UNDP involved the targeted municipalities in the process and obtained their commitment to enforce the payments of residents for the household's connections.

To widen the scope of partnership, UNDP was keen to include all key stakeholders in the PSC (governance body). The PSC included in addition to PW, a representative of Ministry of Local Government (MoLG), the WSRC and heads of beneficiary municipal and village councils. The active involvement of these partners in the meeting of both the Steering Committee (SC) and the project technical committee (PTC) has helped a lot in overcoming obstacles that emerged during the implementation of the project and ensured the successful delivery of the project's results. The direct involvement of municipal and village councils' members in the implementation of the project helped in overcoming difficulties and solving problems during the excavation work and closure of roads during the installation of the wastewater network and giving alternative pipeline trajectories that bring less complains of residents and at the same time ensure achieving project's results successfully.

### ***What factors have contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?***

As one can infer from the above-mentioned statements, the UNDP partnership strategy was one of the main factors that contributed to the effectiveness of the Project. The good design of the project and suitability of its activities to the achievement of the intended results, the project consistence with the country priorities and goals as well as local communities' needs were other important factors of effectiveness.

One of the main factors of ineffectiveness is the reliance of UNDP on a letter of commitment from the served communities to pay for the house connections cost. Perhaps UNDP should have insisted to collect the community contribution before the start of the project.

The reluctance of the village councils to assume their role in collecting the household contribution for the cost of households' connections contributed to the ineffectiveness because without the household connections to the main sewers in An-Nazlat, the access of residents to the wastewater services will not be achieved. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic was another factor that contributed to the ineffectiveness of the project. The pandemic outbreak and its severe negative impact on the already fragile Palestinian economy resulted in the suspension of the Ministry of Finance contribution in covering the households' connection cost. Another important factor of ineffectiveness is the split of An-Nazlat villages

from Baqa Al-Sharqiya municipality. This has resulted in weak village councils' capacity with little experience in managing wastewater services<sup>19</sup>.

***In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supportive factors? How can the project build on and expand these achievements?***

The review of various project's reports, field visits observations and the discussion that the evaluation team had during the data collection phase, enabled the team to conclude that the areas of the greatest achievement are: the construction wastewater networks, installation of wastewater flow meters and installation of wastewater pumping stations. This was possible because UNDP allocated the necessary financial resources in the project's budget and employed a high experienced team of professionals for the project. The main factors behind this achievement was the support provided by PWA and officials in the municipal and village councils to overcome all obstacles that emerged during the implementation. Lessons learnt during the implementation of the project will enable UNDP and PWA to avoid the shortcoming in the planning for similar future projects, particularly to consider the households connections to the main sewers as integral part of the project and to develop mechanisms to ensure payment of the household connections in advance.

***In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could be overcome?***

The project has the fewest achievements concerning the activities that contribute to achievement of output No. 4 and the dispute related to costing of treatment of wastewater crossing the borders from the Occupied Palestinian Territory to Israel through Wadi Abu-Nar, Wadi- Zomer and other streams. The position paper and connected mechanism, which will allow transparent calculation of the amount of money the Palestinian pay for wastewater treatment have not been reached. Also, the site-specific contracts between the PWA and IWA, or the municipalities and Israeli side, were not signed.

The main constraining factors that have hindered the achievement of these outputs are the lack of trust between the Israeli and Palestinian side on one hand and absence of political will due to the unilateral actions taken by Israelis regarding the peace process, on the other hand. Perhaps, trilateral efforts (Israeli-Palestinian-Dutch) could have helped overcome this situation.

The cancelling of the activity of building a bridge between Baqa Al-Sharqiya and Zeita has caused a state of dissatisfaction of the municipality of Baqa Al-Sharqiya. They think that the dis-agreed upon design for the bridge was the reason for that cancelling. When this issue has been discussed with UNDP, it became clear to the evaluation team that the change of status

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<sup>19</sup> It is worth mentioning that Baqa Al-Sharqiya and An Nazlat formed one municipality during the project design and the need assessment that were conducted.

of land property (became registered in TABO) in the near vicinity of the proposed site for the bridge and the change of whole set-up in the proposed site for the bridge: One additional agricultural road was included and affects the width of the bridge substantially, another road was added by the proposed TABO which contradicts with the bridge shoulders, the budget for the bridge was based on a conceptual design realized in 2014 under a different situation. All these changes have made it very difficult for UNDP to implement this activity.

***What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project’s objectives?***

It is fair to state that the partnership strategy adopted by UNDP and the participatory approach and the feasibility study that preceded the preparation of the project represented a good strategy. The very good coordination between the different partners of the project and the involvement of partners, particularly the PWA, in the implementation of the project, were very supportive factors for the achievement of the project’s results. We can say that perhaps it could be necessary to collect the community contribution regarding the cost of household connection to the main sewers in advance. This would have made the management of this process easier and directly under the control of project’s management and not an external factor that might delay the achievement of project’s results.

***Are the project’s objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its framework?***

The evaluation process has shown that the planned activities were very suitable for achievement of the outputs. It has also shown that the logic governing the relation between outputs and objectives is very clear. The technician in the field of wastewater field are very familiar with this kind of activities and outputs. The proposed project’s objectives and outputs are aligned with the country main outcomes and objectives. All these have permitted the evaluation team to judge that the project’s objectives, outputs are practical and feasible within its framework.

***To what extent have the stakeholders been involved in the project implementation?***

Stakeholders involvement in the project’s implementation were rather impressive. However, the level of involvement varies from one stakeholder to the other. While the UNDP, PWA and the local municipal councils were almost on a continuous meeting, other stakeholders’ presence and contribution were restricted to participation in the PTC and PSC. The PWA was involved in: obtaining the permit for the project, coordination with the Israeli side, preparation of the tariff, follow-up with the local authorities and technical supervision of the project. The local authorities in the selected locations were active in solving all problems with the citizens and their role was vital in overcoming emerging obstacles.

***To what extent are project management and implementation participatory? And is this participation contributing towards achievement of project objectives?***

As mentioned in earlier sections and based on the information gathered by the evaluation team from semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, the evaluators can state that the project management was to a great extent, participatory. This has been clear from the very active engagement of both PWA and local councils in the implementation and on the ground whether in the technical supervision or their intervention to solve emerging problems during implementation, follow-up of the implementation of the tariff, and other issues like obtaining permits for certain project’s activities. Other stakeholders (MOLG, WSRC, NRO) were also engaged through their participation in the regular meetings of SC and PTC. NRO also has conducted several field visits to the project’s sites to have a good idea about the progress of the project towards achievement of its results. In one of the field visits, a high official from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation from the Hague, participated.

### 4.3 Efficiency

Under the efficiency the evaluation team has worked to examine and answer the following questions:

***To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?***

The Project management team is composed of four persons: project manager assisted by project assistant, project site engineer as well as a senior site engineer. If we take into consideration the value of the project’s budget, the number of staff members is relatively small. The Project Technical Committee (PTC), in this context plays a supportive role. The implementation modality that UNDP adopted in this Project, where contractors and consultancy firms play an important role in implementation of project’s activities. This has resulted in reducing the load on the project’s site engineers and gave them more time to dedicate to the supervision of the contractors and consultancy firms and to solving emerging problems related to management of the relations with the beneficiaries during the implementation of the infrastructure works. All abovementioned factors enabled the evaluation team to state that the management structure was efficient in generating the expected results.

***To what extent have the UNDP project’s implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?***

UNDP/PAPP works in partnership with governmental agencies (PWA, MoLG, and local authorities) and delivers through the Direct Execution (DEX) modality which was the mechanism for the implementation of this project. Under such modality UNDP/PAPP team remains accountable for the achievement of project’s results and financial management of the project.

The feasibility study that has preceded the design of this project, and the comparative analysis of socioeconomic and environmental factors of four technically feasible options that are currently implemented in rural areas in the West Bank, made of the implemented activities the best choice (on the short term) for achieving the project’s results.

Also, the implementation of this project was divided into two stages and each phase was assigned to different contractor. This has enabled the implementation in the two stages parallelly for quite good period of project implementation which give more guarantee that the project is implemented on time. A look at the workplan confirmed this. The bidding process (open and transparent), with PWA and local authority council’s participation allowed getting the best prices. All these elements allow the evaluator to consider the implementation as cost-effective.

***To what extent has there been economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (fund, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?***

The financial Status report from 01 March 2019 up to 29 February 2020<sup>20</sup> have shown the following figures:

1. Percentage of expenses/budget from 1 March 2018-29 Feb 2020 regarding the Project implementation Unit and operations= 88.8%;
2. Percentage of expenses/budget from 1 March 2018-29 Feb 2020 regarding achievement of activities of output 1= 87.8%;
3. Percentage of expenses/budget from 1 March 2018-29 Feb 2020 regarding output 2and3=89.5%;
4. Percentage of expenses/budget from 1 March 2018-29 Feb 2020 regarding output 4= 60.2

The percentage of expenses/budget from 1 March 2018-29 Feb 2020 regarding total project activities equal= 85.1%.

Percentage of expenses/budget from 1 March 2018-29 Feb 2020 including all project's expenses is equal= 82.6%.

Total commitments and contracts= 691,265.5 \$US which represent 10.3% of the total project's budget.

This means that the total expenses and commitments amount to 6,233,631.4 \$%US. This represents 92.92% of the total budget agreement.

These figures demonstrate that the financial and human resources were economically used.

It is also necessary to mention that the budget for the wastewater vehicle and the budget for installation of local flowmeters in the targeted villages were utilized in the infrastructure works based on recommendations from PWA. This has created a state of dissatisfaction in the municipality of Baqa Alsharqiya and, according to them, will jeopardize their capacity for maintaining the installed wastewater network. After discussing this issue with the project manager, evaluators became convinced that the reallocation of the budget for infrastructure work was very justified. From the economic point of view, renting wastewater vehicle when needed (not before 2-3 years after household's connection) will be more cost-effective. Based on what has been mentioned above, the evaluators consider that the decision for the use of resources (fund, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) were strategically taken to achieve project's results and outcomes.

***To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?***

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<sup>20</sup> Draft of the second-year report of Transboundary Wastewater Pollution Control Project, 30 March 2020

Despite the number of uncertainties in the political environment, nearly all planned activities were achieved within the planned budget. The slight modification in the plans (e.g. the pressurized collection line in Zeita and the accompanying pumping station) were implemented by reallocation of funds originally allocated for other activities in the budget and a top up of 400,000 USD.

The open and transparent bidding process for the various planned activities in the project, that included the PWA in addition to UNDP and local authorities' councils, have enabled UNDP to get the best cost-effective offers for these activities. The above-mentioned factors allowed the evaluators to judge that the resources have been used efficiently to achieve the planned project's results.

***To what extent have project funds and activities delivered in a timely manner?***

The review of the project's documents, reports and field visits, conducted focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews enabled the evaluation team to state that: delivery of funds and activities vary from one output to the other. Except for few exceptions, activities planned under outputs 1 and 3 were implemented on time and within the planned budget. Among those not implemented were the refresh training which was planned for March 2020 and was delayed due to outbreak of COVID-19<sup>21</sup>. The bridge between Baqa Al-Sharqiya and Zeita was cancelled though the conceptual design was prepared due to change of land property status and introduced plans for new streets in the planed site for the bridge.

Activities planned under Outputs 2 and 4 witnessed considerable delay and some of them are still pending. Though the tariffs were prepared and cleared, the new tariff is only implemented partially in Baqa Alsharqiya and Zeita. This tariff is not endorsed by the Council of Ministers as the Water Law foresees. The implementation of the tariffs in the four Nazlat is facing some resistance and reluctance from the village councils of these villages. The lack of trust between the Palestinian and Israeli sides and almost absence of political well, have resulted in delay in finalizing and signing of the site-specific agreement between PWA and IWA (output 2). The same reasons have resulted in the delay of draft of the position paper and endorsing accepted mechanism for the management of transboundary wastewater issues (output 4).

***To what extent do the M&E systems utilized by the UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?***

Within the annual cycle, and according to UNDP's programming policies and procedures, the project was monitored through the following:

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<sup>21</sup> This is an additional activity and was not part of the original work plan of the Project



- Weekly meetings at the project site with the project manager and the site engineers, contractors and village councils when needed;
- Track Progress which is conducted by the site engineers through the monthly progress reports that they present to the Project Manager.
- Monitor and Manage Risk which was done during the annual planning process that is initiated each year in October-November.
- Evaluate and Learn. This has been done during the quality rating of the project that the Project’s Quality Assurance Leader on annual bases. The learning process is covering the various levels concerning: relation with stakeholders, beneficiaries and project management levels.
- Review and Make Course Corrections. This process has been practiced on an annual basis based on the various reports prepared by site engineers, Project Manager and Quality Assurance Leader. The Project’s Board conducts the review and corrections based on recommendations provided by the project manager and quality rating reports.
- Annually:
  - Annual Project Quality Rating. The first-year quality rating report that was conducted after the first year is in fact an internal mid-term evaluation that enabled the UNDP/PAPP decision makers to have an assurance of the best enrollment of the project and to take the right decisions.
  - Annual Project Review and Report.

Project’s reports in this project can be differentiated into several layers. Site engineers provide monthly progress reports to the project’s manager. The Project’s Manager prepares the annual reports according to the contract signed with the donor.

The annual project’s review is done by the project’s Board. As the Project’s assurance leader informed the evaluators, the minutes of the PSC meeting which is dedicated for the review is considered as annual review report.



#### 4.4 Sustainability

The assessment of the sustainability aspects of the Project led to mixed results. On one hand, the wastewater network should provide a sustainable solution for wastewater collection and disposal for the local communities, the training on O&M, and costing is expected to contribute to enhancing the capacities of the targeted LGs to ensure the sustainability of wastewater services. At the national/strategic level the installed flow meters will improve the PWA capacity to monitor and quantify the amount of wastewater that crosses the Green Line. This should strengthen the position and ability of PWA to manage transboundary wastewater, and accurately verify the quantities and invoices received from the Israeli side regarding transboundary wastewater. On the other hand, the uncompleted activities of the project house connections, adoption of tariff structure, and the infrastructure handover process might risk the sustainability of the project results in case no follow up or exit strategy were put in place.

**Infrastructure activities:** The life of the constructed wastewater networks, and installed flow meters and pumping stations extend beyond the closing date of the Project. Normally such networks and devices will last for 20-25 years. The training on O&M provided to the LGs staff is a complementary measure that support the capacity of LGs to maintain and sustain the wastewater facilities. During the interviews and site visits, the evaluation team confirmed that the main lines of the wastewater networks were completed and handed over to the LGs, and that the LGs have the minimum requirements of staff and technical capacity to operate and maintain the networks. However, at the time of drafting this report, part of the house connections have not been implemented which could pose a significant risk on the sustainability of the infrastructure facilities if insufficient quantities of wastewater flow inside the networks and pumps. It should be noted that the house connections were not part of the Project, and the local governments committed to collect the needed fees from residents to finance the execution of house connections. Moreover, to minimize the financial burden on the communities, UNDP requested the support from PWA and MoLG. In March 2020, PWA obtained the approval of the Prime Minister Office (PMO) for NIS 1.5 million to subsidize the cost of house connections, while the balance (50%) will be covered by the community contribution (each household will contribute a total amount of NIS 800). Unfortunately, in May 2020, and due to COVID-19 crisis, the PMO decided to freeze this fund which exposed the implementation of the house connections to great risk.

Another related issue, is the sustainability of the pumping stations; While the local governments agreed that they will be responsible for the O&M of these facilities, it wasn't clear for the evaluation team whether Nazlet Issa (for example) fully understands that this responsibility comes with a cost, and that sufficient budget and specific O&M plan need to be in place as soon as the Project ends.

The handing over of flow meters to PWA will be carried out in late June/early July. According to the contractor, the hand over process should be simple and quick. However, after the end of the Project these flow meters will need regular monitoring and maintenance by PWA. A written, short manual, or Standard Operations Procedures (SoPs) for the O&M of the flow meters will enhance the sustainability of data collection and measurements by PWA.

**Training:** The training provided to the political and technical levels of LGs will help in enhancing the sustainability of Project outputs. Yet, this sustainability relies on various factors including: the ability of the trained individuals to utilize the knowledge and skills in their work, and the readiness of the institutions (i.e. LGs) to benefit from the training outputs and retain the trained individuals. UNDP was planning to conduct a refresh training and awareness activities during March/April of 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 crises this plan was not implemented. During the evaluation process, representatives of LGs reiterated the importance of delivering refresh training and awareness activities after the end of the Project so the staff can sustain and update their knowledge and skills. The evaluation team was informed by the Project manager that this refresh training will be part of the exit phase activities.

**Tariff structure:** The Project developed a new tariff and revenue collection system for the targeted communities. The proposed tariff was prepared in full consultation with local communities and relevant official bodies (e.g. PWA, WSRC, and MoLG). The enforcement of the tariff should enhance the financial sustainability of wastewater services and help LGs in recovering the cost of the services and improve their financial viability. Nevertheless, the evaluator identified a potential major sustainability risk in this regard; It was obvious during the interviews with LGs representatives that none of them were aware of the required legal process to approve and enforce the new tariff. Moreover, interviews with LGs indicated that PWA didn't inform the LGs about the need to submit the proposed tariff to WSRC for review before sending it to the PMO for final endorsement. The Project Manager informed the evaluation team that the LGs were advised during a meeting at MoLG on 6 January 2020 that they need to obtain the approval on the tariff in the weekly village council meetings and then coordinate with PWA and UNDP for further follow up. The deadline to conclude this process was set to be 7 March 2020. However, the emergency situation of the COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the follow up steps. In a meeting at the Project office in April, UNDP were informed that the current situation is not encouraging to go further in applying the tariff. However, the fees for the house connections, only 800 NIS, was approved at the level of the village councils.

**Transboundary (position paper, site specific contracts, and flow meters):** The Project provided essential tools and products that could enhance transboundary management and control of pollution, given that these tools are completed and utilized after the Project. Most likely, these tools will also help the PA in reinforcing its legal position, and verifying the money deducted by Israel to cover the cost of wastewater treatment. As a result, financial

sustainability of the PA will be strengthened, and conflict between the two sides will be mitigated.

The position paper titled "Potential approaches for the management of wastewater flows with transboundary impacts across the Green Line" was produced by the international consultant and submitted to both UNDP and PWA for final review and approval. At the time of drafting this report, the draft position paper is still under review and discussion between PWA, UNDP, and the consultant. Once finalized, the position paper should serve as a reference and guiding document for the PA in any future negotiation and discussion with the Israeli side. Furthermore, the position paper included several recommendations for sustainable dealing with transboundary issues. PWA should review these recommendations and integrate them in its work plan.

As mentioned earlier, the installed flow meters will support PWA efforts to manage transboundary wastewater, and should lead to a transparent, more efficient management of financial transactions related to transboundary wastewater. However, achieving this objective is conditioned to the ability of PWA to monitor, maintain, and utilize the flow meters in obtaining and analyzing timely and relevant data.

In this respect it is worth mentioning that, though present staff is doing their best to look after wastewater issues at PWA, the burden on the present staff is enormous and there is a serious need for reinforcement of the Wastewater department in order to ensure sustainability of the follow-up and obtained results provided by the flow meters.

Site specific contracts are another key piece of the transboundary puzzle that require continuous attention by PWA and other stakeholders after the end of the Project. Despite the tremendous efforts exerted by UNDP since the earlier phase of the project in 2013, the standard site-specific contract between PWA and IWA has not been signed. According to UNDP advancing this issue is linked to the finalization of the position paper and the political willingness of PWA.

**Exit strategy and next phase:** for both UNDP and PWA the Project is part of an overall program to enhance transboundary wastewater management which started in 2009 with a Japanese funding, and then continued through Dutch funding from 2014 to date. To maintain the momentum of previous phases/efforts, UNDP has developed a concept for the next phase and discussed it with the NRO. Just before the start of COVID-19 crisis, the Netherlands gave the initial approval on the concept of the next phase for USD 5.0 million. However, due to the global pandemic emergency, the Dutch government put on hold the development aid including the fund for the next phase. The faith of the next phase is still uncertain, and UNDP is maintaining the dialogue with various partners on this regard.

As a temporary alternative, UNDP requested a bridging phase/fund of \$ 200,000 to allow for six-month preparatory work to maintain the engagement and commitment of local partners

and communities. The evaluation team strongly supports this option, and encourages the various partners (UNDP, PWA, Netherlands, etc.) to continue the dialogue on how to further advance transboundary wastewater arrangement. It is also recommended that the next phase should focus on building the institutional and technical capacity of PWA in relation to wastewater management, installing more flow meters, implementing the remaining components of the feasibility study (e.g. wastewater treatment plant, and rehabilitation of Wadi Abu Nar) and improving the wastewater infrastructure in other marginalized communities.

## 5 Learning and Recommendations

### Strategic level:

**Lesson learnt:** Water and wastewater transboundary relations and issues are complicated and challenging. A holistic and continuous approach is essential in addressing the multi-faceted aspects of this issue; political, technical, economical, security, etc. The involvement of the international community (e.g. donors) and expertise (e.g. consultants) is key to improve the relations between the two sides and strengthen the PWA/PA position and capacity to deal with transboundary water and wastewater.

**Recommendation:** Continue working on the draft position paper, and utilize the trilateral meetings (Dutch, PWA, and Netherlands) to discuss and agree on a transparent, equitable, and relevant transboundary arrangement and financial structure.

**Recommendation:** Transboundary issues require better attention from both the technical and political levels of PA/PWA. Despite the documented dedication and engagement of relevant technical staff of the PWA in the development of the position paper, the involvement of the political/leadership level of PWA/PA in formulating a transboundary position is critical in ensuring a political cover and guidance to the technical outputs and discussions. The PA should consider formulating a ministerial committee (e.g. PWA, Ministry of Finance, MoLG, Ministry of Civil Affairs, and others) to guide and oversee the position of the PA in relation to transboundary matters.

**Lesson learnt:** Supporting individual, small LGs should be considered within the overall national reform strategies related to: (1) consolidating/amalgamating small LGs into large municipalities of Joint Service Councils (JSCs); and (2) the ultimate creation of RWUs. During the evaluation process, national stakeholders expressed their commitment to this reform agenda. However, they also noted the challenges related to the capacity of small LGs, and the conflicting legal framework regarding the water issues and LG sector responsibilities.

**Recommendation:** In future interventions/phases, the selection of communities and LGs to be targeted should be done in full coordination between MoLG and PWA, bearing in mind the stages of creating RWUs as stipulated in the RWUs Roadmap.

**Lesson learnt:** Since its establishment in 1994, the PA and its partners exerted tremendous efforts and financial resources toward improving the planning, design, management and delivery of water services. As a result, the Palestinian communities witnessed a significant improvement in their access to water services. However, less investment and planning were provided to enhance wastewater systems in Palestine. In addition, the capacity of PWA and relevant stakeholders to manage wastewater services is still limited and lacks the sufficient financial, technical and human resources.

**Recommendation:** To improve the planning, design and delivery of wastewater services, it is recommended to work with PWA in devising a national master plan and strategy for wastewater in Palestine. In addition to providing institutional capacity building and technical assistance to the existing wastewater department of the PWA.

**Lesson learnt :** Installation of wastewater’s networks in Palestinian communities without the construction of treatment plants and associated treated wastewater reuse schemes, will lead to concentration of pollution or increase in the volumes of wastewater that cross the borders to Israel and eventual increase of the value of wastewater treatment bill that the National Palestinian Authority pay to Israel.

**Recommendation:** We recommend that PWA develop a policy regarding wastewater including the criteria of selection of beneficiary communities of wastewater services and the reuse of treated wastewater. The reuse schemes could be coordinated with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA).

**Lesson learnt:** The roles played by one of the important key stakeholder, MoLG, was relatively small compared to their official responsibility as a reference for local authorities in the targeted communities. This could be attributed to weak coordination among project’s partners. The good coordination among the project’s partners and key stakeholders is very vital for the success of any project.

**Recommendation:** To clarify the roles at the beginning of the project as integral part of the project’s document and project’s governance structure.

### **Operational level:**

**Lesson learnt:** Installation of flow meters to measure wastewater flow in the streams crossing the green line, is a very important tool that would improve the capacity of PWA to manage the transboundary issues related to wastewater with the Israelis. It might improve the trust between PWA and IWA regarding this issue.

**Recommendation:** The installed flow meters are vital in providing the PWA with accurate, and timely data about wastewater flows to the Israeli side. we recommend expanding the installation of flow meters to other streams and locations, and supporting PWA in collecting, and analyzing the data generated by the flow meters.

**Lesson learnt:** Despite the interest of local communities to have proper wastewater services, and their appreciation for the constructed wastewater networks, the willingness to pay for the house connections is still questionable. An important lesson for future interventions, is to secure the community contribution as a prerequisite before the start of the project.

**Lesson learnt:** To improve the effectiveness of the project in ensuring successful achievement of project’s outcome “Increase access to wastewater networks and services”, it is necessary

that households' connection to the wastewater network immediately follow the handover of the sewers work. The delay of households' connection leads to the postponement of access to wastewater services and delay of part of the components of the sewerage system (testing of pumping station in Nazlet Issa).

**Recommendation:** PWA and MoLG should follow up with the PMO regarding releasing the NIS 1.5 million which was approved to subsidize house connections.

**Recommendation:** For future interventions, and like the German funded projects, a special bank account should be opened to secure the contribution of the community and government before the approval/start of the project.

**Recommendation:** PWA and MOLG should follow up with LGs to make sure that the needed O&M plan and budget are available to operate and sustain the wastewater facilities.

**Recommendation:** A written SoPs/manual for monitoring and operating the flow meters should be developed to assist PWA in utilizing these measurement systems. Training on data measurement and analysis could help in providing accurate and timely reporting to decision makers about transboundary wastewater.

**Lesson learnt:** The development of a new tariff and revenue collection system is key for enhancing the financial sustainability and viability of wastewater services.

**Lesson learnt:** The process of tariff calculation and implementation was not accomplished. Evaluators noticed that local authorities (municipal & village councils) are not aware of the right procedures for its endorsement and the key player in the process of endorsement (according to laws in figure, WSRC) has not been informed.

**Recommendation:** PWA should follow up with LGs to ensure that the LGs submit the proposed tariff structure to WSRC for official approval.

**Lesson learnt:** The involvement and buy in of the targeted communities can be enhanced by implementing refresh/continuous capacity building and awareness activities.

**Recommendation:** PWA and MoLG should include refresh training and awareness activities to local communities and LGs in their capacity building plans. UNDP should consider providing refresh training to the targeted LGs as part of the next phase/intervention.

### **Exit strategy and next phase:**

Transboundary wastewater is a complicated, long term issue that requires financial, technical, and political leverage. The Project contributed to improving the wastewater services and capacity of the PA to manage transboundary issues. However, the needs are still massive, and thus more efforts and resources should be exerted by the different actors. A next phase of



the project is vital to maintain the achieved results and contribute to protecting the public health and safeguarding the environment. The new phase should :

- Build the capacity of national institutions on wastewater management and pollution prevention including PWA, MoLG, WSRC, and service providers/LGs
- Observe the national strategic direction related to creating Regional Water Utilities in the selection and targeting of new local governments.
- Activate the use of flow meters and add more measurement systems in strategic locations of transboundary flows.
- Contribute to the long term recommended options of the feasibility study, such as: constructing a WWTP in the project targeted area, and implementing the master plan of Wadi Abu Nar.
- Advance the progress on the position paper, and on the site-specific contracts.
- Once the position paper is finalized and endorsed by the PA, key practical actions/recommendations of the position paper should be integrated in the PWA strategies and work plans. The next phase of the project could support PWA in realizing some of these actions.



## 6 Annexes

## **6.1 Annex A: ToR of the Assignment**

## 6.2 Annex B: Evaluation Matrix

Evaluation questions	Indicators	Sources	Tools
<b>Evaluation Criterion – RELEVANCE</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent was the project in line with the national development priorities, the country programme's outputs and outcomes, the UNDP Strategic Plan and the SDGs?</li> <li>To what extent were lessons learned from other relevant projects considered in the project's design?</li> <li>To what extent were perspectives of those who could affect the outcomes, and those who could contribute information or other resources to the attainment of stated results, taken into account during the project design processes?</li> <li>To what extent does the project contribute to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the human rights-based approach?</li> <li>To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to political, legal, economic, institutional,</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationships established within project levels (long term goal, objective, outcomes and outputs)</li> <li>Coherence project design vs implementation approach</li> <li>Degree of involvement and inclusiveness of stakeholders in Project design</li> <li>Perceptions of stakeholders as to whether Project responds to national priorities and existing capacities at municipality and community level</li> <li>Extent to which lessons learnt from other projects have been incorporated in project design</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project documents</li> <li>UNDAF</li> <li>Palestinian national strategies.</li> <li>Project PSC meetings minutes.</li> <li>SDGs website</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project partners</li> <li>Project beneficiaries (municipalities and communities)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of project documents</li> <li>Review of national policies or strategies</li> <li>Review of websites</li> <li>Interviews with project staff</li> <li>Interviews with project partners</li> <li>Interviews with communities' representatives</li> <li>Focus group discussion with project community</li> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation Criterion – EFFECTIVENESS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent did the project contribute to the country programme outcomes and outputs, the SDGs, the UNDP Strategic Plan and national development priorities?</li> <li>To what extent were the project outputs achieved?</li> <li>What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended country programme outputs and outcomes?</li> <li>To what extent has the UNDP partnership strategy been appropriate and effective?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results framework indicators</li> <li>Degree of fulfilment of goals according to results framework</li> <li>Identification of supportive and hindering factors for project implementation</li> <li>Perceptions of stakeholders and evidences as to whether the project achieves its intended outcomes</li> <li>Extent to which the implementation of</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project progress reports</li> <li>UN SDG Website</li> <li>Project staff</li> <li>Project partners</li> <li>Project beneficiaries (municipalities and communities)</li> <li>Observations from the site visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review of project documents</li> <li>Interviews with project staff</li> <li>Interviews with project partners</li> <li>Interviews with communities' representatives</li> <li>Focus group discussion with project communities.</li> <li>Data analysis</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What factors contributed to effectiveness or ineffectiveness?</li> <li>• In which areas does the project have the greatest achievements? Why and what have been the supporting factors? How can the project build on or expand these achievements?</li> <li>• In which areas does the project have the fewest achievements? What have been the constraining factors and why? How can or could they be overcome?</li> <li>• What, if any, alternative strategies would have been more effective in achieving the project's objectives?</li> <li>• Are the projects objectives and outputs clear, practical and feasible within its frame?</li> <li>• To what extent have stakeholders been involved in project implementation?</li> <li>• To what extent are project management and implementation participatory and is this participation contributing towards achievement of the project objectives?</li> <li>• To what extent has the project been appropriately responsive to the needs of the national constituents and changing partner priorities?</li> <li>• To what extent has the project contributed to gender equality, the empowerment of women and the realization of human rights?</li> </ul>	<p>the Project has been inclusive of stakeholders and collaboration with partners</p> <p>- Stakeholder satisfaction with the level of their engagement in project decision making mechanism</p>		
<b>Evaluation Criterion –EFFICIENCY</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent was the project management structure as outlined in the project document efficient in generating the expected results?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Evidence of clear roles and responsibilities for operational and management structure</li> <li>- Evidence of the use of the results framework as management tool</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of project documents</li> <li>- Interviews with project staff</li> <li>- Interviews with project partners</li> <li>- Data analysis</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent have the UNDP project implementation strategy and execution been efficient and cost-effective?</li> <li>• To what extent has there been an economical use of financial and human resources? Have resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes?</li> <li>• To what extent have resources been used efficiently? Have activities supporting the strategy been cost-effective?</li> <li>• To what extent have project funds and activities been delivered in a timely manner?</li> <li>• To what extent do the M&amp;E systems utilized by UNDP ensure effective and efficient project management?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Perceptions of stakeholders and evidences as to whether the project activities are on track</li> <li>- Extent of compliance with the expected work plan</li> <li>- Perceptions as to cost-effectiveness of project</li> <li>- Level of execution of project budget</li> <li>- Evidence of use of finance resources to make management decisions/adaptive management</li> <li>- Stakeholder satisfaction with project staff: accessibility, capabilities &amp; skills, expertise applicable knowledge, efficiency and timeliness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project beneficiaries (municipalities and communities)</li> <li>- Observations from the site visits</li> </ul>	
<b>Evaluation Criterion - SUSTAINABILITY</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are there any financial risks that may jeopardize the sustainability of project outputs?</li> <li>• To what extent will financial and economic resources be available to sustain the benefits achieved by the project?</li> <li>• Are there any social or political risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project outputs and the project's contributions to country programme outputs and outcomes?</li> <li>• Do the legal frameworks, policies and governance structures and processes within which the project operates pose risks that may jeopardize sustainability of project benefits?</li> <li>• To what extent did UNDP actions pose an environmental threat to the sustainability of project outputs?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Availability of funding for sustaining project's outcomes by the end of the project</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions about social and political risks, which may harm project outcomes</li> <li>- Evidence of relevant environmental risks</li> <li>- Evidence of stakeholders' ownership</li> <li>- Evidence of lesson learned documented</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions about exit strategy envisioned by UNDP and partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- National policies and strategies</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project partners</li> <li>- Project beneficiaries (municipalities and communities)</li> <li>- Observations from the site visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of project documents</li> <li>- Interviews with project staff</li> <li>- Interviews with project partners</li> <li>- Interviews with communities' representatives</li> <li>- Focus group discussion with project community</li> <li>- Data analysis</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the risk that the level of stakeholders' ownership will be sufficient to allow for the project benefits to be sustained?</li> <li>• To what extent do mechanisms, procedures and policies exist to allow primary stakeholders to carry forward the results attained on gender equality, empowerment of women, human rights and human development?</li> <li>• To what extent do stakeholders support the project's long-term objectives?</li> <li>• To what extent are lessons learned being documented by the project team on a continual basis and shared with appropriate parties who could learn from the project?</li> <li>• To what extent do UNDP interventions have well-designed and well-planned exit strategies?</li> <li>• What could be done to strengthen exit strategies and sustainability?</li> </ul>			
<b>Evaluation Criterion - Evaluation cross-cutting (Human rights, and Gender equality)</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent have disadvantaged and marginalized groups benefited from the project?</li> <li>• To what extent have gender equality and the empowerment of women been addressed in the design, implementation and monitoring of the project?</li> <li>• Is the gender marker data assigned to this project representative of reality?</li> <li>• To what extent has the project promoted positive changes in gender equality and the empowerment of women? Were there any unintended effects?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extent of the Project inclusivity to the needs of disadvantaged and marginalized groups.</li> <li>- Stakeholders' perceptions about gender equity aspects.</li> <li>- Evidence of involvement of women in the Project design, implementation, and monitoring</li> <li>- Evidence of availability of gender relevant data and indicators in the Project.</li> <li>- Evidence of lesson learned documented</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Project documents</li> <li>- National policies and strategies</li> <li>- Project staff</li> <li>- Project partners</li> <li>- Project beneficiaries (municipalities and communities)</li> <li>- Observations from the site visits</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review of project documents</li> <li>- Interviews with project staff</li> <li>- Interviews with project partners</li> <li>- Interviews with communities' representatives</li> <li>- Focus group discussion with project community</li> <li>- Data analysis</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Existing policies and mechanisms supporting gender equality, development and human rights</li></ul>		
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### **6.3 Annex C: List of Reviewed Documents**

#### **Project related documents:**

1. The Project Document.
2. The First Annual Progress Report (Dated 8 April 2019).
3. The draft Second Annual Progress Report (Dated 30 March 2020).
4. MoM for Steering Committee Meeting (Dated 26 November 2018)
5. MOM for project steering committee (Dated 4 March 2019)
6. MOM for project steering committee (Dated 6 October 2019)
7. Final Position paper (Dated 2 May 2020)
8. UNDP Public Awareness final report (March 2019)
9. Feasibility Study, 2014 .

#### **National strategies and reports:**

10. The National Policy Agenda (2017-2022)
11. National Water Sector Strategic Plan and Action Plan (2017- 2022)
12. Roadmap for the Creation of Regional Water Utilities in the Frame of the Water Sector Reform in Palestine, April 2017, Final Phase 2 Completion Report, ORGUT Consulting AB.
13. Water Law of 2014, and its amendment of 2018.

#### **Other documents:**

14. United Nations Development Assistance Framework State of Palestine (2018-2022)
15. The Final Evaluation Report of “Promote peace building through cross boundary wastewater management in the occupied Palestinian territories Project”, Sep 2013.
16. HRBA and Water/sanitation, Sida, Jan 2015.



## 6.4 Annex D: List of Interviews and Focus Groups

### List of interviews:

	<b>Interviewee</b>
1.	UNDP-Project Manager
2.	UNDP-Programme Analyst
3.	PWA
4.	PWA
5.	MoLG
6.	WSRC
7.	NRO
8.	NRO
9.	Flow meters quality assurance
10.	House of Water and Environment
11.	House of Water and Environment
12.	IHE- International Consultant
13.	IHE- International Consultant
14.	Mei Meron, Israeli side

### List of Focus groups:

1.	Focus Group with Zeita Municipality-June 8, 2020: Attendees: 1. Mayor of Zeita; 2. Member of Municipal council of Zeita,
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Municipality engineer;</li> <li>4. Municipality accountant</li> </ul>
2.	<p>Focus Group with Nazlat councils-June 11, 2020:</p> <p>Attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Head of An-Nazla Al-Gharibia Council</li> <li>2. Engineer of Nazlat Council</li> <li>3. Head of An-Nazla Alwusta Council</li> <li>4. Head of Nazlet Issa Council</li> </ul>
3.	<p>Focus Group with Baqa Al-Sharqia-June 7, 2020.</p> <p>Attendees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mayor of Baqa Al-Sharqia</li> <li>2. Municipality Engineer</li> <li>3. Council member</li> </ul>
4.	<p>Focus Group with Baqa Al-Sharqia residents-June 7, 2020.</p> <p>Attendees: 5 males and 1 female.</p>