

## Local Infrastructure & Capacity Building Project (LICP) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Funded by	Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGDC), Belgium
Executing agencies	- Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC) - Ministry of Local Government (MoLG)
With participation of	Local Government Units, Municipalities, Village Councils, Joint Service Council for Planning and Development (JSCPD), Ministry of Local Government Directorates
Project location	Palestinian Territories; in the regions of Tulkarem, East Jerusalem, and Salfeet
Project start	December 2002
Duration	3 years, extended till the end of 2009
Budget	7.855.296 €
Sector(s)	Rural Development

### Context

As a consequence of the political situation, unemployment and poverty have increased during the second intifada and numerous villages and towns have suffered severe damages.

The major focus of the Belgium Technical Cooperation during the past year has been on building municipal capacities as a key development objective. The Local Government Units (LGUs) are trying to meet the increased demand for services requested by the citizens which requires that the LGU staff be well trained, and acting on a professional way. LICP has been providing municipal capacity building (both human and institutional) and budget support in areas such as financial management, planning, and service provision. LICP has been responding to the immediate needs as well as the structural needs of the smaller LGUs and their communities. The project has continued to implement small scale infrastructure building (such as public library, women's centre, public hall, street lighting,



pavement and rehabilitation of internal roads...etc) to improve the general conditions and services for socio-economic development.

## Objectives

The overall development goal of the project is poverty reduction in rural areas. The **specific objective** of the project is to improve the local service provision by benefiting 23 target municipalities and Village Councils. Such improvement is expected to derive primarily from the construction of supporting infrastructure and the adoption of appropriate management, operation and maintenance practices. Given the diversity of sectors in which municipal services are delivered (general administration, transport, water, electricity, health, education, communications, etc.).

*The project consists of two main components:*

**Component 1** supports investments in local infrastructure facilities to improve the provision of services in 23 participating Local Government Units, grouped in 6 Joint Service Councils of the West Bank.

**Component 2** to provide budget support and capacity building activities to a selected number of municipalities and village councils. This component has two sub-components:

1. Training and other capacity building activities in order to improve the municipal planning, programming and budgeting functions and procedures as well as improved unified local financial management and transparent revenue and expenditures reporting systems.
2. A fiscal transfer mechanism the Capacity Building Fund (CBF) to provide modest but predictable annual financing of municipal investment programs, and act as incentive for local institutional strengthening;

## Progress

In a period of five years, fifty-nine infrastructure projects have been carried out and completed. These infrastructure projects have benefited the communities of 37 Local Government Units, 23 of which were targeted in the initial stages of the program. While the activities under Component-1 were planned to be carried out in the initial stages of the program, in reality it took much longer. As late as November 2007 the last two infrastructure projects were handed over. So after 3 years, 100% of the planned infrastructure plus the additional equipment that were not foreseen in the original project document and paid for by savings have been completed.



In the Transitional Phase LICP has worked with 34 LGUs focusing on Joint projects beginning in 2008.

Currently under the Transitional Phase infrastructure projects are being implemented in three JSCPDs. The focus is on joint projects in these areas. LICP is working with the JSCPDs to strengthen their capacity and provide services in order to be capable of amalgamation. Ten projects have been identified of which three have been completed. In Al Sharawiyah JSCPD the project aim was to rehabilitate and pave roads connecting the towns and villages of Al Sharawiyah JSCPD. New road entries



for the villages were made and will serve the residents and farmers of the villages and towns. The roads will enhance the lives of the citizens in all aspects, geographically, economically and socially. Also in East Salfeet JSCPD rehabilitation and paving link roads was a priority due to the main entrance into the villages of Hares connecting to Kefel Hares was closed by the Israelis. The main entrance to Hares has been blocked by the Israeli construction of a new road to be used by Israelis only and is no longer accessible to the citizens of East Salfeet area.

Marda Village suffers from isolation for its geographic nature adjacent to Arayel Settlement and is considered one of the stricken villages in the Governorate in addition to the apartheid separation wall which closed the village from all sides.

Also in East Salfeet JSCPD a priority was to deliver water to all parts of the village due to the fact that water is not delivered to the reservoir because of the weakness of the source (Makarot) and the high level of the reservoir with respect to the pumping point from the source. The solution is to install a pump that can deliver water to the reservoir. The project is considered a rehabilitation process for the water reservoir.

Each Joint Service Council for Planning and Development (JSCPD) has budgets approved by Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) and these include funds for operations and maintenance of the built infrastructure and purchased equipment. Some of the infrastructures which have been built under LICP project have been completed and are in the process of being equipped with computer equipment and books through other donor's harmonization and coordination.

All BTC trained staff are national, in order to enable a professional local management of activities with the support of short term international backstoppers.

Projects funded under the Capacity Building Fund were all infrastructure projects such as:

1. Construction of required classrooms on existing schools;
2. Construction of multi-purpose centers, headquarter building of JSCPD, public library and women's centre, public hall, street lighting;
3. Pavement and rehabilitation of internal roads;
4. Construction of desirable Public Park.

Based on several needs assessments, a comprehensive training programme for human resource development was organized. Thirty six courses on a variety of topics and of different duration (ranging from 2 to 10 days) have benefited about 500 of municipal staff in different positions (elected members and staff in technical, financial and administrative areas), JSCPD staff and MOLG staff.

Institutional development: Planning has been the focus of training initiatives. The limited funds for institutional development are related to the working environment (physical, organizational, institutional). Many of these priorities towards improving those conditions closely linked to requirements emerging from Human Resource training activities. The funds under this line item were used for mainly equipment purchases such as faxes, copiers, computers and printers to facilitate the work of the Local Government Units.

Based on the MOLG's goal to have a unified accounting system, LICP pioneered in this area and developed in coordination with the MOLG a financial management system that was installed in 11 LGUs and continued in 2008 in an additional 6 LGUs. All LGUs expressed their satisfaction with this system. The system is operational and useful, budgets and reports have been developed.



## Perspectives

LICP has invested in building infrastructure and municipal capacities in the LGUs. Further development in these areas is a key development objective in this transition phase especially in Capacity Building Projects.

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