

# Update Water Support Programme for the Palestinian Territories

*January – October 2020*



## Water Support Programme

The Water Support Programme is an initiative of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The programme is executed by the Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) and the Netherlands Water Partnership (NWP).



Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Netherlands Enterprise Agency

# Update Water Support Programme for the Palestinian Territories

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## Introduction

In this newsletter we update you on water support related activities in the Palestinian Territories. 2020 has proven to be a difficult year for the Palestinian Territories. COVID19, the political and economic situation make it challenging. Nonetheless, a lot has been done in 2020 so far. Therefore, we would like to thank all actively involved professionals in both the Palestinian Territories and The Netherlands for all we have accomplished together.

Let's work together to create an impact.

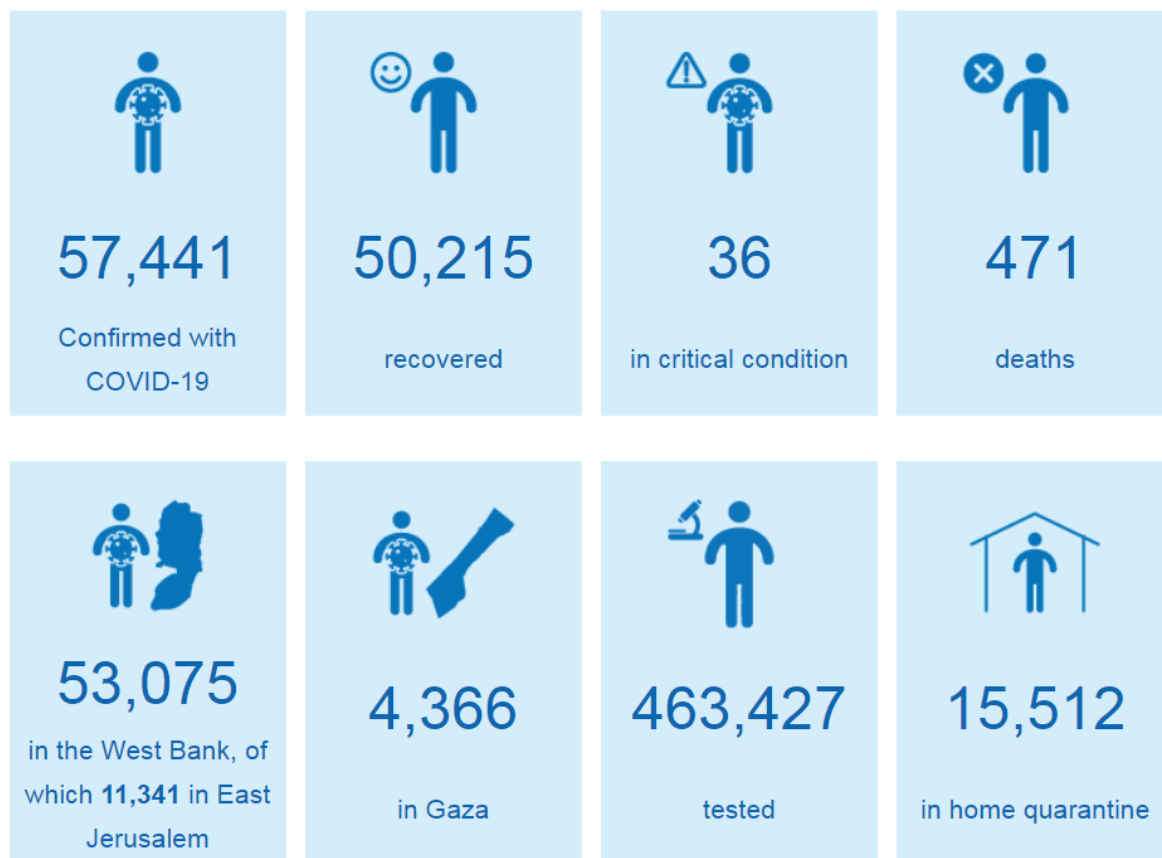
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# 1. COVID-19 in the Palestinian Territories

The global COVID-19 crisis hit the Palestinian Territories in early March 2020, when the first cases of people having the virus were confirmed. This triggered the declaration of a state of emergency by the Palestinian Prime Minister and the imposition of restrictions to contain the spread. The humanitarian community is supporting the authorities in managing the crisis.

## What is the situation?



Figures above are provided by the Palestinian Ministry of Health, update of October 15, 2020. The number of Palestinians from East Jerusalem with COVID-19 is included based on local sources.

The humanitarian community quickly prepared a [detailed plan](#), launched on 27 March 2020 and updated on 25 April, and is acting upon it. Humanitarian organisations and funds have re-allocated and raised donations required for successful implementation and are constantly updating the necessary interventions based on developments. OCHA is issuing a [situation report](#), mapping what people need, what support has been given and what needs to be resolved. Updated information on <https://www.ochaopt.org/covid-19>

The NRO in Ramallah is in close contact with the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) to monitor actual needs of the WASH sector in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

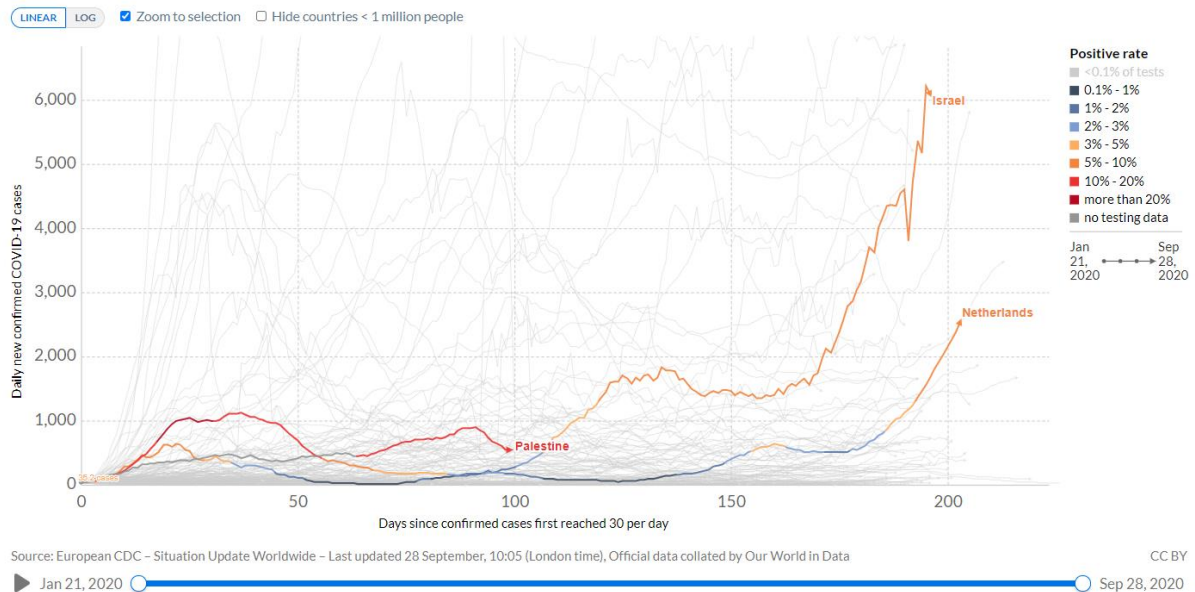
The NRO will contribute to a research project on surveillance of COVID-19 in waste water which integrates Dutch expertise and local knowledge.

September 28, 2020

## Daily new confirmed COVID-19 cases

Shown is the rolling 7-day average. The number of confirmed cases is lower than the number of actual cases; the main reason for that is limited testing.

Our World  
in Data

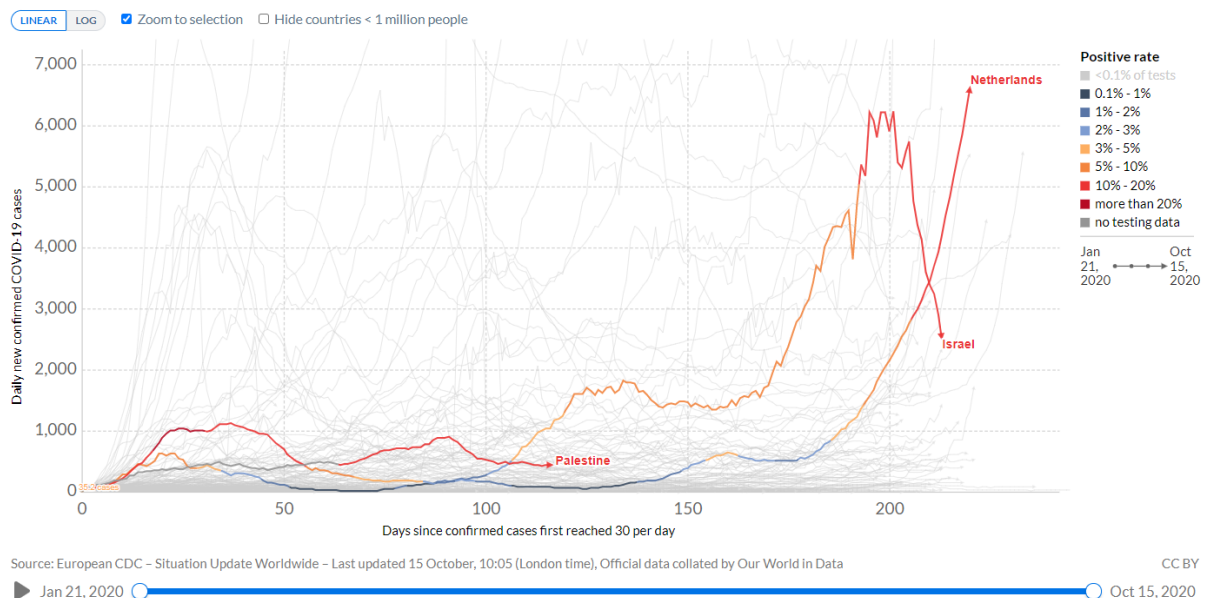


October 15, 2020

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Our World  
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## 2. Blue Deal partnership with Palestinian Water Authority exchanges COVID-19 knowledge

Source: [www.waternet.org](http://www.waternet.org) - By Stefan Nijwening, Dutch Water Authority Vechtstromen

Since 2019, the Dutch Water Authorities are supporting the Palestinian Water Authority via the Blue Deal Programme. Due to the COVID-19 outbreak, travelling to the Palestinian Territories is no longer possible. However, the Dutch Water Authorities keep on providing immediate advice and support on how to best deal with the COVID-19 crisis from a distance.

### The water challenge in the Palestinian Territories

Water is scarce in the Palestinian Territories. The whole region is water stressed, but circumstances in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are particularly difficult for managing water resources due to the challenging political climate in which the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) has to operate. Established in 1995, it is the main government agency in charge of water resource management in the Palestinian Territories. One of its key objectives is to expand and improve drinking water and wastewater services in the fast-growing villages and cities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Especially sewerage and wastewater treatment are currently far below standards or even completely absent in some towns and neighbourhoods. Significant investments are needed to build the required infrastructure, but that's not enough. There is also a shortage of relevant knowledge, experience and skills to manage water resources and improve water and wastewater services sustainably.



### Blue Deal programme of the Dutch Water Authorities

Since 2019, the Dutch Water Authorities (DWA) are assisting and advising the Palestinian Water Authority in water sector reform, as part of the Blue Deal programme of the Dutch Water Authorities. It's a relatively small cooperation programme, consisting of a small group of Dutch experts from Dutch Water Authorities Waternet, Vechtstromen and Rivierenland that assist and advise the Palestinian Water Authority staff on technical, financial and organisational aspects. The programme was getting well underway, when COVID-19 also hit the Palestinian Territories and the country effectively came into lock-down. Since then, the Palestinian Water Authority is struggling to fight COVID-19 and deal with the required measures.

The Blue Deal Partnership Palestinian Territories has set up a [LinkedIn platform](#) on which Palestinian and Dutch water experts can share their knowledge and innovations. The aim is to find sustainable solutions to the many challenges facing the Palestinian water sector. If you also want to become a member and learn more about water governance, water management and wastewater treatment, you will find the platform here.

### COVID-19

Ever since the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus, travelling to the Palestinian Territories is impossible. But that hasn't stopped the Dutch experts from working with their colleagues in the Palestinian Territories. Moreover, the focus has shifted towards providing immediate advice and support to the Palestinian Water Authority in their efforts to ensure safety and to fight COVID-19. For example, by sharing and customizing the first scientific insights from The Netherlands about COVID-19 in wastewater and the emergency measures that Dutch Water Authorities have taken to prevent further spreading of COVID-19 by staff and through wastewater. Furthermore, the group of experts from The Netherlands is currently looking into possibilities to mobilise unique wastewater treatment technology solutions from The Netherlands that could ensure proper treatment of wastewater from a number of hospitals in the West Bank. Moreover, a number of companies from The Netherlands have already offered their help.

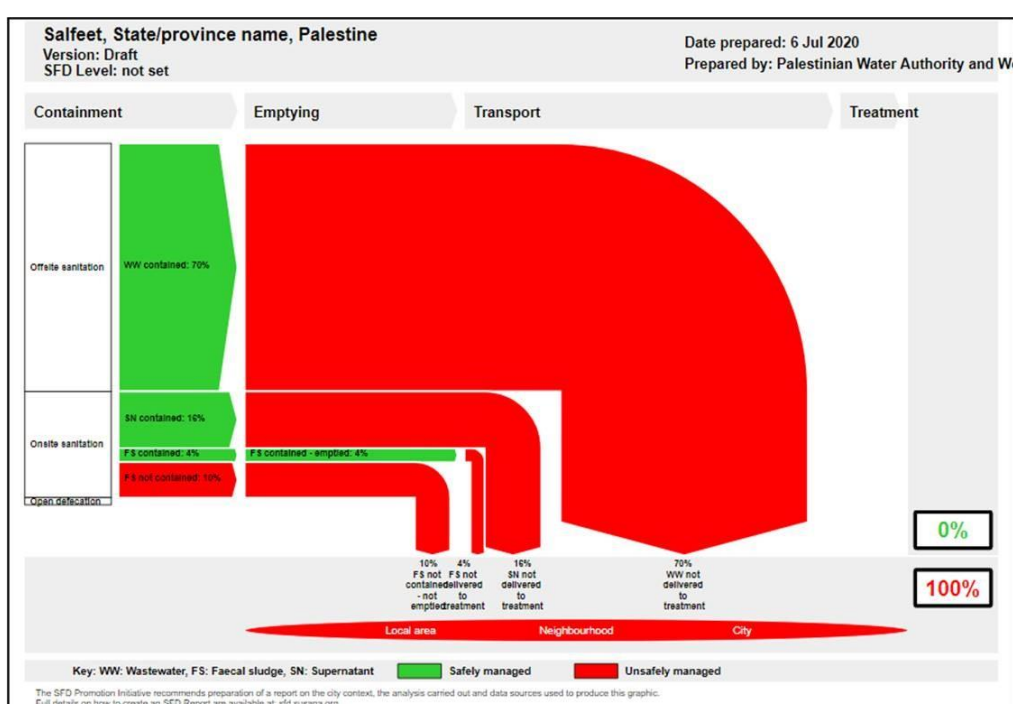
The current crisis underlines the value and importance of the Blue Deal partnership programme. Also, from a distance, Dutch water experts are in close contact with their Palestinian colleagues, keeping an open line of online communication for moral support and all kinds of questions that emerge in the fight against corona. The partnership programme quickly adapted to the new circumstances and challenges facing the Palestinian Water

Authority. In times like this, even a small team of experts from Dutch Water Authorities can provide much appreciated help, support and advice. In a country almost completely cut off from the rest of the world, such support is highly appreciated.

### First results

The Palestinian Territories face major challenges regarding sanitation. Almost all the collected waste water is discharged untreated into the surface water, and therefore poses a great risk to ecology and public health. Within the Blue Deal project, work has recently been carried out on a so-called 'Shit Flow Diagram', a handy visual tool that shows at a glance how waste water flows are collected, transported and processed in a city or region.

This tool has now been developed for the Palestinian city of Salfeet and will also be developed for other Palestinian municipalities. Furthermore, a decentralised treatment option - the BluElephant - is being developed in collaboration with the investment fund of Waterschap de Vechtstromen, WECT, entrepreneurs and Saxion University of Applied Sciences, which can process the wastewater from hospitals safely and quickly.



## 3. Young Expert Programme – Meet the expert Loay Alatrash

Recently, Loay Alatrash started working with World Waternet for the Blue Deal and WaterWorX projects in Palestine for a period of two years. He is appointed as local Project Leader and Coordinator at the Palestinian Water Authority, focusing on the Palestine municipality Salfeet and the Joint Service Council for North Hebron. Loay has joined the Young Expert Programme (YEP), a Dutch programme that provides young water experts the opportunity to gain experience in an intercultural environment and develop personal goals. He will dedicate the next two years to the 'water sector reform', that aims to reduce the fragmented water governance in Palestine and find solutions to challenges such as the shortage of water, increasing water demand and financing water infrastructure. The time has come for a proper introduction!

The full interview can be found [here](#)

## 4. Doing business in the Palestinian Territories

The Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO.nl) provides information and financing for Dutch entrepreneurs who want to do business abroad. On the RVO country pages you can find information on doing business in selected countries, like the Palestinian territories [www.rvo.nl/onderwerpen/internationaal-ondernemen/landenoverzicht/ondernemen-palestijnse-gebieden](http://www.rvo.nl/onderwerpen/internationaal-ondernemen/landenoverzicht/ondernemen-palestijnse-gebieden)

### Project ideas?

If you have a project idea, the Water Support Programme team for the Palestinian Territories can assist you further to find the right subsidy for your project. Please find our contact details below.

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## 5. Online activities Palestinian Territories

Due to COVID19, a lot of events have taken place online. One of the benefits is that these online events, usually webinars, are made available afterwards.

Below a list of some interesting webinars that took place in the past months:

- Institute for Palestine Studies – [Denying Life: The Annexation of Palestinian Water](#)
- Ecopeace - [EcoPeace Global Dialogues Webinar #2](#)
- Arava Institute for Environmental studies - [Water as an instrument for Peace](#)

Webinars focused on the MENA region:

- [Climate Change, Conflict, and Water Politics in the Arab World](#)
  - [Water diplomacy, a tool for climate action?](#)
  - [New Water Technologies to Achieve Water Security in the Arab Region](#)
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## 6. Water and Energy for Food (WE4F)

WE4F is a joint international initiative of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the Foreign Ministry of the Netherlands, Sweden through the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). More information: <https://we4f.org/>

The Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region is subject to many challenges including water scarcity, environmental degradation, unemployment, conflicts and increased migration. Tackling issues in the water-energy-food nexus is imperative to achieve political and social stability, gender equality and inclusion, food security, and sustainable development.

The MENA Regional Innovation Hub (MENA RIH) supports innovators that work in the region and produce more food while using less water and energy. Together with investors and other partners, the MENA RIH works to scale mid-to-late stage enterprises that have an environmental and social impact in the water-energy-food nexus. Based in Beirut, Lebanon, the MENA RIH supports innovators in the following countries and territories: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, The Palestinian Territories, Tunisia, Sudan, and Yemen.

We will keep you updated on this new and challenging initiative.

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## 7. Overview Nuffic programmes in The Palestinian Territories

The Palestinian Territories have been selected to participate in the Orange Knowledge Programme as a way to contribute to solving the country's severe water problems. In the Palestinian Territories, the Orange Knowledge Programme focuses on knowledge and skills development of professionals in the water sector and specifically on efficient use of water in climate smart agriculture and on better access to water and sanitation (WASH) through good governance and sound technical management. The OKP Country Plan of Implementation (CPI) describes the purpose and intentions of the implementation of the Orange Knowledge Programme (OKP) in the Palestinian Territories. The Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education (Nuffic), administers the OKP programme in 54 countries on behalf of the Dutch government.

The knowledge to knowledge programme's focus lies on providing professionals in the water sector and knowledge institutions offering education and training responsive to the needs of the labour market, and provide equal opportunities for men, women and marginalised groups. In addition, the programme promotes alumni activities to create connections between knowledge professionals in the two countries. The programme's theory of change for the Palestinian Territories is to ensure that water is used sustainably and equitably by all users, through increasing water efficiency in agriculture and to provide people access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitary facilities. The Orange Knowledge Programme's budget for the Palestinian Territories is 3 million euros, with co-funding and matching of funds being encouraged.



The priority theme water was selected and encompasses (i) the efficient use of water in climate smart agriculture (CSA) and (ii) improved access to water and sanitation WASH through good governance and sound technical management. The OKP Institutional Collaboration Project "Strengthening education and research in Water, specifically efficient water management for climate smart agriculture (CSA) and improved access to water and sanitation WASH through good governance and sound technical management" is the multi-annual partnership for which the Al Najah National University in Palestine is in the lead. The project started in July 2019 and will end in December 2021. Dutch parties involved are IHE Delft, University of Twente, TU Delft, WUR and VU Amsterdam and next to the Al Najah National University, 8 other Palestinian universities are part of the consortium. In Palestine, within the OKP project the involved universities have a good relationship with the PWA and the project includes private sector involvement.

Theme	Topic	Duration	Budget (EUR)	Dutch partners	Country A partners
Water	Strengthen education and research in Water, specifically efficient water management for climate smart agriculture (CSA) and improved access to water and sanitation WASH through good governance and sound technical management.	01/06/2019 – 31/12/2021	1,993,660	IHE Delft, University of Twente (UT), TU Delft (TUD), Wageningen University and Research (WUR), VU University Amsterdam (VU)	An Najah National University, Al Quds University (AQU), Birzeit University (BZU), Hebron University (HE), Palestinian Polytechnic University (PPU), Polytechnic Technical University Kadori (PTUK), Arab American University Palestine (AAUP), Islamic University of Gaza (IUG), Al Azhar University, Gaza (AZU).

Other ongoing OKP projects, Tailor Made Trainings (TMTs) are:

Theme	Topic	Duration	Requesting organisation	Dutch organisation
FNS	From water scarcity to sustainable water use by vulnerable communities in rural areas in Palestine.	30/06/2019 01-07-2020	Juzoor	BE Link Consultancy
Water	Fostering Cross-Sector Collaboration to Promote Innovation in the Palestinian Water Sector	10/01/2020 10/06/2020	Water Sector Regulatory Council	MSM Maastricht School of Management
Water	Train of the Trainer on innovative solutions for the food security through circular water management	01/08/2020 30/07/2021	Palestinian Farmers Union (PFU)	BE Link Consultancy
Water	Improving Local Water Governance and Water Cycle Management	01/08/2020 01/08/2021	Palestinian Water Authority	The Hague Academy for Local Governance, Waternet

Scholarships - In 2018, 10 scholarship grants have been awarded to candidates from the Palestinian Territories, of which 30 percent was awarded to female and 70 percent to male participants. Food and Nutrition Security is the theme most scholarships were awarded (50 percent) to.

2018:

Type of scholarship	Total	Gender (F/M)	Awarded grant amount (EUR)	FNS	Water	SRHR	SRoL
Master	1	0/100%	27,277	1 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Short course	9	33/67%	53,951	4 (44%)	3 (33%)	0 (0%)	1 (11%)
<b>Total</b>	10	30/70%	81,228	5 (50%)	3 (30%)	0 (0%)	1 (10%)

2019:

Type of scholarship	Total	Gender (F/M)	Awarded grant amount (EUR)	FNS	Water	SRHR	SRoL
Master	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Short course	8	3/5 (38%/62%)	49,938	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	1 (13%)	1 (13%)
<b>Total</b>	8	3/5 (38%/62%)	49,938	2 (25%)	6 (75%)	1 (13%)	1 (13%)

2020:

Type of scholarship	Total	Gender (F/M)	Awarded grant amount (EUR)	FNS	Water	SRHR	SRoL
Master	2	2/0 (100%/0%)	62,922	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)
Short course	0	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	2	2/0 (100%/0%)	62,922	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (100%)	2 (100%)

## 8. Improving Local Water Governance and Water Cycle Management in the Palestinian Territories

In Palestine more than 300 Water Service Companies supply water and manage wastewater. The vast majority face significant problems resulting from weak institutional capacity, insufficient water availability combined with poor infrastructure and high water losses, as well as insufficient revenue generation. As a result, services are not meeting the needs of the citizens, leading to a lack in their willingness to pay water bills, which further affects the sustainability of service delivery.

### Improving Local Water Governance and Water Cycle Management

In August 2020, the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), The Hague Academy for Local Governance and World Waternet kicked-off the one-year training programme '*Improving Local Water Governance and Water Cycle Management*', funded by Nuffic's Orange Knowledge Programme. This programme will provide training on local water governance and water cycle management to staff members from the PWA and Water Service Companies. It will focus on two pilot areas in Salfit Governorate and Hebron Governorate.

The programme will provide practical skills training that will further develop into so-called Back Home Action Plans, which will aim to improve institutional capacity of PWA staff to address its challenges. In addition, a Training-of-Trainers is offered to ensure that participants gain the necessary skills to facilitate and deliver the knowledge of the content training to colleagues, partners and clients in the Palestinian water sector.

### WaterWorX and Blue Deal partnership

This training programme is a fitting complement to the long-term partnerships the Blue Deal (2019 – 2030) and WaterWorX (2020 – 2030). The Blue Deal partnership between the PWA and Dutch Water Authorities (DWA) focuses on water allocation, water quality control and wastewater treatment - with World Waternet as lead partner and regional water authorities Vechtstromen and Rivierenland as the executive operating agencies. The WaterWorX partnership between the PWA and World Waternet focuses on drinking water, also within local municipalities, and intends to ensure drinking water security in the West Bank, as well as improving strategic planning, water treatment capacity, Non-Revenue Water and pro-poor WASH connections.

### Role of NWP in building networks

As a direct result of the Water Platform for Palestinian Territories event organised and hosted by NWP, The Hague Academy for Local Governance and World Waternet began exploring opportunities to cooperate along each organisation's expertise. Both The Hague Academy for Local Governance and World Waternet are grateful to NWP for connecting us and supporting these efforts, which resulted in the training programme described above. This is yet another example of NWP bringing experienced organisations together to deliver results.



More information on: <https://www.wereldwaternet.nl/en/latest-news/2020/october/kick-off-nuffic-okp-training-programme-to-improve-local-water-governance-and-water-cycle-management-in-the-palestinian-territories/>

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## 9. Dutch economic mission to Israel and the Palestinian Territories – outcomes and follow-up

A Dutch economic mission to Israel and the Palestinian Territories took place earlier this year under the leadership of Ms Sigrid Kaag, the Dutch Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, just before COVID-19 became pandemic. Businesses and knowledge institutions seeking opportunities to apply water technology were invited.

Agreements have been made with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to organise bilateral cooperation forums every two years to strengthen and deepen mutual relations at government level, within the business community and in the field of knowledge. This visit gave substance to the economic part of these forums. The focus of the economic programme in Israel was on the themes of Circular Economy and High Tech Systems and Materials, and in the Palestinian Territories on ICT and Agri & Food. These topics involve synergy between Dutch and local economic priorities and the Netherlands positions itself as a reliable and attractive partner for achieving sustainable economic growth. Through this mission, the Dutch private sector was also mobilised to strengthen local private sector development and economic resilience in the Palestinian Territories. In the recruitment of the economic mission, companies were encouraged to visit both Israel and the Palestinian Territories, despite differing market characteristics.

The economic mission provided starting points for a positive, forward-looking joint agenda. The programme consisted of a combination of matchmaking, individual and collective field visits and seminars. In Tel Aviv and Ramallah, Dutch and respectively Israeli and Palestinian companies and knowledge institutions came together during network meetings opened by Minister Kaag.

In the Palestinian Territories, agriculture is one of the most important sectors with economic growth potential. The Palestinian ICT sector is also growing and offers many opportunities for the future. Minister Kaag opened a networking lunch for Dutch and Palestinian companies and organisations, highlighting these opportunities. Tailor-made matchmaking conversations and field visits facilitated the making of new contacts and deepening of existing contacts.

During the visit, attention was paid to the international climate agenda (SDG 13) and (sustainable) economic growth (SDG 8), and the way in which (circular) innovations in areas such as agri & food (SDG 2), water (SDG 6), mobility (SDG 9), sustainable cities (SDG 11) and

responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) can contribute to this. Female entrepreneurship (SDG 5) also played an important role in the programme. The mission has stimulated progress on societal challenges in this area by getting acquainted, providing inspiration, transferring knowledge and exploring collaboration opportunities (SDG 17).

#### Some of the results and follow-up

Tightening and broadening of the economic relationship with Israel and the Palestinian Territories respectively. This was done, among other things, by establishing contacts and exchanging expertise between Dutch, Israeli and Palestinian entrepreneurs, knowledge institutions and governments.

The economic relationship between Dutch and Palestinian companies has also been strengthened thanks to this mission. During the visit, for example, a cooperation agreement was signed between Dutch and Palestinian companies for a waste-to-energy facility in the West Bank.

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## 10. Ongoing projects

### NRO activities

UNDP will start a Dutch funded project on transboundary waste water in Attil in the western part of the West Bank. It will include infrastructure such as collection systems, pipelines and flowmeters and institutional elements such as a water tariff. The relevance of the project lies – apart from providing access to sanitation services for almost 10.000 people – in identifying cross-border treatment costs and creating a management system for transboundary waste water flows. The project is a follow-up project by UNDP in the same area to which IHE Delft contributed in the form of a position paper.

The NRO will contribute to a regional research on the detection of COVID19 in waste water. Target areas are rural communities and the Hebron urban area. Outputs are a dataset and assessment of the presence and spreading of coronavirus in waste water, capacity building workshops and a set of recommendations concerning health guidelines and policy. KWR Water will share Dutch expertise and conduct joint analyses with the ultimate objective to contribute to an improved Palestinian monitoring system for virus outbreaks.

In Yatta in the south of the West Bank, a Dutch funded project focusing on providing drinking water for 70.000 - 80.000 people is being developed which would give UNICEF a leading role concerning the implementation of the works and possible soft infrastructure components.

After a serious escalation in Gaza that led to a further tightening of the blockade and reduced energy supply, a breakdown of the sewage management services occurred. The situation seemed to have improved after a truce was reached. The World Bank has taken the decision to support fuel supply for the major waste water facility NGEST, also to prevent sewage overflows in the near future. The import of materials for project works in the area of desalination and associated works (managed by the World Bank with contributions from the Netherlands) is slowly picking up again. Two desalination stations (around EUR 50 million) funded by Germany/KWF have entered the tendering phase. The political situation and lack of Israeli-Palestinian coordination continue to pose numerous challenges to water security for Gazans.

The NRO will finance a project focusing on maximizing crop-use efficiency to support a climate resilient wheat cropping system. The Hebrew University and a Palestinian partner will conduct research that would among others lead to Palestinian researchers, students and breeders having an improved capacity in breeding processes and efficient crop use under difficult climatic conditions.

## 11. Donor funded tenders in the pipeline

- World Bank - West Bank and Gaza - Wastewater Management Sustainability Project
  - GTAI - Ausbau der Wasserversorgungsinfrastruktur, Phase II - Beitrag zentrale Meerwasserentsalzungsanlage Gaza
  - World Bank - Water Security Development - Gaza Central Desalination Programme
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## 12. Contacts



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