



EXECUTIVE BRIEF

WEST BANK AND GAZA STRIP

21 November 2012

HIGHLIGHTS

- **Donor funding committed to FAO:** The West Bank and Gaza Strip portfolio currently consists of 9 ongoing projects, with a total value of USD 17.6 million, and three projects in the pipeline, valued at USD 9.9 million in total.
- **Main donors** include: Belgium, Canada, the European Commission, Italy and Spain, as well as funding through the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS).
- **FAO's emergency programme is reaching around 12 900** vulnerable households in the West Bank and Gaza Strip dependent on agriculture (equivalent to 70 950 women, men and children).
- **Increasing support is needed in the areas of:**
 - FAO Plan of Action (PoA) Component 1: Support to the fishing industry (including aquaculture) in the Gaza Strip and interventions to support the livelihoods of vulnerable communities (farmers and herders) in Area C;
 - FAO PoA Component 2: Support to private sector stakeholders (farmers, agribusiness, associations and cooperatives) suffering from insufficient knowledge of modern agricultural practices and farm management and often lacking up-to-date equipment;
 - FAO PoA Component 4: Strengthening food safety standards, regulatory framework and infrastructure in the West Bank and Gaza Strip; and
 - FAO PoA Component 6: Evidence-based information analysis and coordination.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Due to ongoing conflict, the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBGS) faces a protracted crisis situation characterized by access restrictions to natural resources (water and land), longevity of economic food access crisis, breakdown of livelihoods and insufficient institutional capacity to react to it. The movement of goods and people into and out of WBGS has been severely restricted, and this has negatively impacted the lives of the Palestinian population.

Over the last ten years, families across WBGS have been struggling increasingly to sustain their way of life because of continued and mounting Israeli restrictions over land, water resources, sea, markets and services. Restrictions limit or cut-off access to Palestinian lands behind the Separation Barrier (9.5 percent of the West Bank) and in Area C¹ which consumes 61 percent of the West Bank.² Palestinians with land near settlements in the West Bank are barred physically from their land, or constrained from reaching the land owing to an arduous Israeli permit regime. Closed military zones also restrict access in the West Bank.

In the Gaza Strip, the total population affected by Israeli-imposed restrictions to land and sea is estimated at 178 000 people, or 12 percent of Gaza's population.³ Farmers and herders cannot enter restricted areas near the Israeli border, which represent 35 percent of the Strip.⁴ Fishers lack access to the sea beyond 3 nautical miles (nm) from the shore, and are often restricted to 1.5–2 nm in practice as a result of arbitrary gunfire and arrest. Farmers and herders along Gaza's border and fence areas also come under threat of gunfire when trying to reach their farmland. Compounding the current political scenario in WBGS, environmental issues such as the effects of untreated sewage and high salinity on Gaza's agricultural production, natural calamities (namely water scarcity) and plant and animal diseases place agricultural livelihoods at an even greater risk of deterioration or collapse.

¹ Area C is under full Israeli control over security, planning and construction.

² OCHA. June 2010. *West Bank Movement and Access Special Report*.

³ OCHA/WFP. August 2010. *Between the Fence and a Hard Place, Humanitarian Impact of Israeli Imposed Restrictions on Access to Land and Sea in the Gaza Strip*.

⁴ Ibid.

As a major consequence of these restrictions, roughly 1.3 million Palestinians are food insecure.⁵ Food insecurity prevalence among households whose main breadwinner is employed in the agriculture sector is 30 percent in the West Bank and 62 percent in the Gaza Strip.⁶ These families have developed negative coping mechanisms, including reducing expenses on education for children and replacing protein food sources with carbohydrate items (from meat to bread), which reduces micronutrient intake.

AGRICULTURE SITUATION OVERVIEW

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) estimated that there are some 146 000 households reliant on land farming and livestock rearing (including fishing) in WBGS, out of which approximately 128 000 are considered small or medium size. FAO is focusing primarily on small-scale and secondarily on medium-scale farmers, herders and fishers.

	Small	Medium	Large	Total
Land farmers	30 624	47 174	7 495	85 295
Productive assets (dunums)	0.7	4.1	32	
Livestock owners	25 908	2 995	1 226	30 129
Productive assets	2 heads	25 heads	145 heads	
Land and Livestock Owners	10 219	10 568	9 468	30 273
Land assets (dunums)	0.8	2.8	23	
Animal assets	7.33 heads	12 heads	31 heads	

Several of the key humanitarian issues in WBGS – namely (i) restricted access and poor livelihood protection, (ii) environmental issues, and (iii) natural disruptions – severely impact Palestinians dependent on agriculture for consumption purposes or as a source of income.

• Types of production

The main rainfed crops cultivated in WBGS include wheat, barley, tomatoes and sweet peppers. Orchards include olives and citrus. Production from small ruminant herders (sheep, goats and chickens) also contributes significantly to the economy.

In addition to farmers and herders, there is significant potential for fishing (currently a dormant industry due to access and movement restrictions) to be reactivated to contribute to the economy in the Gaza Strip.

• Priority needs and challenges

There is an immediate need to protect male and female farmers, herders and fishers to ensure agricultural livelihoods are viable and allow households to have the purchasing power to at least meet their basic needs. Yet, a more strategic focus on reducing vulnerability and enhancing resilience is crucial for diminishing the need for continued humanitarian aid or implementing unsustainable interventions. Linking small-scale local production with major food assistance programmes will help to relieve the food insecurity of the general population and boost the local economy, while simultaneously protecting vulnerable agricultural livelihoods.

DONOR FUNDING TO FAO EMERGENCY ACTIVITIES

Total funding received thus far in 2012: USD 10.5 million

FAO main donors: Belgium, Canada, the European Commission, Italy and Spain, as well as funding through UNTFHS.

CAP - main funding mechanism

FAO WBGS had six projects in the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) 2013 amounting to USD 12 273 000 which addressed: (i) quick impact emergency interventions to protect endangered

⁵ FAO/WFP/PCBS/UNRWA. 2011. Socio-Economic and Food Security (SEFSec) survey.

⁶ FAO/WFP/PCBS/UNRWA. 2011. Socio-Economic and Food Security (SEFSec) survey data. The regional food insecurity average for the West Bank is 17 percent and for the Gaza Strip, 44 percent.

livelihoods of poor and small-scale farmers in Area C, Seam Zone and the Gaza Strip against external shocks; (ii) improving protection for fishers and farmers in the Gaza Strip, access restricted areas; (iii) emergency support to vulnerable herding communities in Area C and marginalized localities of the West Bank; (iv) Restoring damaged agricultural assets and productive capacities of farmers and herders affected by demolitions; (v) emergency backyard food production activities in vulnerable and marginalized areas of WBGS; and (vi) strengthening the food security coordination platform in the WBGS.

FAO'S EMERGENCY AND REHABILITATION PROGRAMME IN ACTION

Since 2002, FAO has supported the preparation for, and response to, food and agricultural threats and livelihood emergencies in WBGS through emergency relief, rehabilitation and revitalization of productive capacity. FAO interventions help protect access and entitlements of Palestinian farming households to land, water, services and markets. Such interventions are essential to enhance overall food security, reduce dependency on relief assistance among vulnerable Palestinians and contribute to institution building.

FAO published its Medium-Term Assistance Strategy, "Bridging Emergency and Development: Strategy for FAO Assistance", in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and Ministry of Planning. The document outlines plans for the development of the agriculture sector in WBGS and programmatic approaches to bridging emergency, early recovery and development phases from 2010 to 2015. In 2010, the agricultural community, led by the MoA of the Palestinian Authority and supported by FAO, developed a "Shared Vision" (Strategy) for the agriculture sector for the period 2011–2013.

FAO interventions are guided by the programmatic vision of WBGS PoA for 2011–2013, which is the first of its kind for the region and was launched in early June 2011. The document was endorsed by the MoA and presents six main programmatic components where FAO has a clear comparative advantage.

Overall objective: To improve food security of the Palestinian population.

Ongoing activities:

PoA Component 1 – Improved household-level food production

- **Horticulture:** Boost fruit and vegetable cultivation and backyard food production through the provision of essential inputs, equipment and training.
- **Animal production and health:** Restore and protect herders' livelihoods through water cistern rehabilitation, animal health interventions, fodder production/distribution and the establishment of herders' feed/service centres.
- **Fisheries:** Stabilize the livelihoods of fishers and aquaculture producers through inputs and training.
- **Natural Resources:** Improve the management of water resources through small-scale irrigation networks, water storage and grey wastewater treatment; and raise awareness of the impact of climate change on agriculture and food security in WBGS.

PoA Component 2 – Higher incomes and strengthened purchasing power and PoA Component 3 – Higher domestic food quality and nutrition

- **Women and Youth:** Support female-headed households with income-generation activities; enhance the livelihood skills of vulnerable youth through Junior Farmer Field and Life Schools; and pilot gender mainstreaming in the agriculture sector.

PoA Component 4 – More adequate food safety

No activity yet funded.

PoA Component 5 – Strengthened institutional capacity and PoA Component 6 – Reinforced operational coordination and evidence-based, food security related information management

- **Emergency Preparedness and Response:** Coordinate response to agricultural emergencies (e.g. avian influenza, Tomato Leaf Miner and Red Palm Weevil outbreak); rehabilitate agricultural assets (farmland, greenhouses, animal shelters, irrigation pipes and irrigation water wells); and support the national plan for addressing water scarcity.
- **Food Security Information and Analysis:** Information gathering and analysis to achieve: (i) understanding of the livelihood-associated risks and coping mechanisms; (ii) monitoring the

risks factors and effects on household resilience and identifying the appropriate course of action⁷; and (iii) a coherent and effective system of information which captures lessons learned and best practices in preparing for and responding to livelihood shocks.

- **Coordination and Technical Cooperation:** Lead stakeholder consultations on humanitarian response planning; enhance good agricultural practices and quality standards in food **production at the micro and institutional level**; and manage the Agricultural Projects Information System – a multi-agency response monitoring tool for agriculture.

Beneficiaries:

The WBGS programme currently reaches approximately 12 900 vulnerable households dependent on agriculture, or 70 950⁸ women, men and children in WBGS.

Staffing set up:

The WBGS field programme currently employs eight international staff (four fixed-term staff and four international experts) and 34 national staff members.

FAO PROJECTS (ONGOING)

Project/programme title	Objective	Funding	Donor	Implementation period
OSRO/GAZ/109/BEL Rapid mitigation of the livelihood crisis in the Gaza Strip	To improve household-level food production and strengthen operational coordination and evidence-based, food security-related information management.	USD 645 995	Belgium	Nov 2011 - Nov 2012
OSRO/GAZ/202/CAN Protection of Farmer Livelihoods (West Bank)	To prevent the erosion of the productive capacities and asset base of livestock-holding families (male- and female-headed) in the West Bank, and to support livestock farmers in increasing the productivity and profitability of their trade.	USD 5 983 844	Canada	March 2012 - April 2014
OSRO/GAZ/203/CAN Emergency backyard food production activities in vulnerable and marginalized areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip	The project's overall objective is to mitigate food insecurity, protect households' fresh food consumption, and help households generate necessary income in targeted areas of the WBGS through emergency support to backyard food production and income-generating opportunities for women and youth.	USD 3 989 229	Canada	April 2012 - April 2014
OSRO/GAZ/002/UNO Livelihood protection and sustainable empowerment of vulnerable rural and refugee families in the Jordan Valley through integrated income generating interventions	To improve economic security and livelihoods of local communities in the Jordan Valley, through in-kind support to enhance and diversify water efficient agricultural production and income generating activities.	USD 2 027 660	UNTFHS	July 2010 - June 2013
OSRO/GAZ/807/ITA Agriculture Revitalization Project – Phase II	To (i) increase the availability and efficient use of natural resources; (ii) rehabilitate the production base and small infrastructure; (iii) introduce and propagate new management practices and build local capacities; and (iv) improve market linkages and income per household by better understanding market requirements, reducing production costs, increasing production yields, quality and marketability.	USD 2 720 000	Italy	Feb 2011 - Jan 2013

⁷ FAO has piloted an innovative method – Resilience Analysis Model – to improve humanitarian delivery through evidence-based and rationalized food security information, analyses and coordination. This methodology has been piloted in Gaza through a DFID-funded project to gauge evidence-based impact assessment, which will be implemented by other UN agencies (UNRWA, UNIFEM, UNESCO and FAO) through UNTFHS.

⁸ Based on a number of 5.5 persons per household in WBGS, PCBS, 2010.

OSRO/GAZ/204/NET Improving food security in North Gaza through land rehabilitation and open-field vegetable production	To assist with the reclamation and planting of agricultural land belonging to targeted beneficiaries in Um Nasser. By enabling them to grow open field vegetable crops, the food security of an estimated 1 050 people (over 1/5 of the village) by improving their economic access to – and the availability of – sufficient food.	USD 479 000	The Netherlands	Jan 2012 – Oct 2013
UNJP/GAZ/003/SPA Culture and Development – (MDGF-1841)	To foster institutional development, social cohesion and sustainable economic development through culture-related activities and tailor-made programmes based on the notion of cultural diversity.	USD 391 683	Spain	April 2009 – Sept 2012
GCP/GAZ/006/SPA Support to FAO Programme Coordination, Jerusalem	To increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the use of resources in food security and agriculture-related interventions.	USD 726 744	Spain	Feb 2012 – Jan 2014
OSRO/GAZ/108/EC Supporting the livelihoods, food security of poor rural families through improving rain water harvesting and management for agricultural purposes	To protect/improve the livelihoods and food security levels of poor rural families through enhancing rain water harvesting and management for agricultural purposes and job/income opportunities.	USD 2 057 613	European Union	Oct 2011 – Feb 2013

FAO PROJECTS (PIPELINE)

Planned project/programme title	Objective	Donor	Funding required
OSRO/GAZ/205/BEL Emergency backyard food production activities in vulnerable and marginalized areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip	To provide immediate livelihoods relief to poor and vulnerable families in urban and semi-rural areas through the provision of agricultural inputs and technical support to develop and demonstrate simple household garden and aquaculture systems for vegetable and fish production in Gaza.	Belgium	USD 700 000
OSRO/GAZ/207/NET Market Oriented and Sustainable High Value Crops Sector Development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip	To sustainably improve the capacities and self reliance of small and medium scale high value and export crops producers in the WBGS, so that their products can compete in national and international markets, through developing sound and sustainable commercial processing and marketing systems, on the basis of improved chain of production and enhanced capacities and involvement of all relevant stakeholders	The Netherlands	USD 5 000 000
OSRO/GAZ/201/EC Support livestock based livelihoods of vulnerable population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. (The institutional level component of the Food Security Thematic Programme [FSTP])	To enhance public and private capacities and service delivery to encourage the economic development and improve resilience of female and male livestock holders – including the Bedouin communities.	European Union	USD 4 521 625

KEY MESSAGE

The agriculture sector remains a significantly under-funded sector in WBGS, and there is an immediate need to protect male and female farmers, herders and fishers to ensure agricultural livelihoods are viable, help to relieve the food insecurity of the general population and boost the local economy.

CONTACTS

Cyril Ferrand

Senior Emergency and Rehabilitation Coordinator
FAO Coordination Office
25 Mount of Olives Street
Sheikh Jarrah
Tel.: +972 (0)2 5321950
Email: cyril.ferrand@fao.org

Daniele Donati

Chief
Emergency Operations Service
Emergency Operations and Rehabilitation Division
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, Rome 00153, Italy
Tel.: +39 06 57056767
Email: daniele.donati@fao.org