Evaluation Summary

Mid-term evaluation for Improving the livelihood, social and economic conditions, and strengthening resilience for Area C Communities

Pays : **Palestinian Territories** | Secteur : **Rural development**

Évaluateur : **ABC Consulting**
Date de l'évaluation : **March 2025**

Key data on AFD support

Project number : CPS1198
Amount : 10 M€
Disbursement rate : 55%
Financing Agreement signature date : 05/12/2019
Completion date: 31/12/2025
Duration : 5 years

Context

Area C makes up 60% of the West Bank and remains under full Israeli control, particularly over strategic resources like land, water, and energy. Movement restrictions and settlement expansion severely impact Palestinians, whose access to water is four times lower than that of Israeli settlers in the same area. This project builds on a first phase funded by AFD in Area C—the Rural Development Project in the Jordan Valley (approved in June 2015, €5 million)—targeting villages near Al Jiftlick in the Central Jordan Valley. It adopts a bottom-up, community-led approach aligned with France's support for the two-state solution outlined in the 1995 Oslo Accords. The second phase scales up efforts in remote, vulnerable rural areas, addressing social, economic, and environmental challenges. It integrates lessons from the first phase with improved risk analysis and a gender-sensitive lens, while contributing to climate resilience efforts. Targeting 27,000 beneficiaries across 19 communities in Salfit, Tubas, and Al Jiftlick, the project includes delegated funding to the European Union. AFD is committed to a long-term engagement to ensure project sustainability.

Stakeholders and operating procedures

The Ministry of Local Government will be in charge of managing the project and supporting local authorities in the planning process. A national technical assistance team will be in charge of supervising and coordinating the project (activities and capacity building program). The Municipal Development and Lending Fund will be in charge of managing infrastructure investments in area C with the funds delegated to the European Union by AFD.

Goals

The project aims to promote inclusive development and strengthen Palestinian sovereignty, local governance, and sustainable development of 19 communities in Area C, over a 42-month period from 2021 to 2025.

To achieve its goals, the project focused on:

- Community development and 'quick-win' projects
- Service delivery in Area B and C, and infrastructure investments
- Livelihood in Area B and C, especially housing improvement, psychosocial and legal support, and income-generating projects
- Capacity development of Central and Local Institutions

These components are a part of the project's overall objective of improving the livelihood, social and economic conditions and strengthen the resilience of these communities

Performance assessment

Relevance

The RDP II proved to be highly relevant in various dimensions by linking design, objectives, and interventions to the needs and priorities at the community level in Area C and B within the West Bank, and to the broad goals set by the Palestinian Authority's national policy frameworks. Despite the challenges and constraints faced, the project continued to implement its activities and displayed remarkable resilience and adaptability.

Effectiveness

The project has made significant progress towards achieving its objectives and delivering tangible benefits to vulnerable communities in Area C & B of the West Bank. The project has successfully engaged the targeted communities to identify and prioritize their needs, leading to the development of Community Development Plans and the implementation of quick-win projects and infrastructure investments. The Israeli restrictions and demolitions impacted the project outputs, and posed a formidable obstacle to project implementation, particularly in Area C. Other challenges that affected effectiveness included slow implementation due to lengthy bureaucratic procedures, limited local councils capacities, and weak communication and coordination among stakeholders.

Efficiency

While the technical assistance, PMU, focal points, and MoLG leadership aimed to contribute to the project's efficiency, various challenges hindered the project's overall efficiency to some extent. These challenges included coordination issues, external factors like demolitions by Israeli Authorities, and suboptimal collaboration between the MoLG and village councils. Addressing these challenges and fostering stronger synergies with other development projects could further improve the project's efficiency in the future.

Impact

The project has contributed to the improved livelihoods of many beneficiaries at different levels through its holistic approach in the communities of Area C within the West Bank: directly improving access to basic services, enhancing livelihoods, and empowering women and youth. The investments made by the project in infrastructure spurred off local economic activities and created jobs. While the complex political context raise challenges to long-term sustainability, the project’s mainstreaming approach contributed to generating more equitable and sustainable outcomes that reach the beneficiaries.

Replication

The project offers valuable lessons and proof of concept for effective, community-driven development in a highly complex and constrained context like the occupied Palestinian territories. Its success in fostering local ownership, strengthening participatory planning, and aligning with beneficiary needs through inclusive engagement provides a strong foundation for future replication and scale-up. Key enabling factors such as comprehensive needs assessments, gender mainstreaming, strategic capacity building, and responsive grievance redress mechanisms could be institutionalized to enhance the model's impact and sustainability. However, limited and inconsistent capacities within local government units, coordination barriers between key institutions, restrictive Israeli policies and practices, and weak monitoring and evaluation systems have posed constraints to efficiency and adaptive management.

Added value of AFD support

AFD's €10 million grant enabled a multi-faceted, integrated approach to improving livelihoods, resilience and socioeconomic conditions for over 22,000 vulnerable Palestinians across 19 communities in Area C and B of the West Bank. The project's holistic design, spanning participatory planning, basic infrastructure, economic development and institutional capacity building, reflects good practice in fragile contexts.

Recommendations

To enhance project performance and impact moving forward, the evaluation offers a range of strategic and operational recommendations:

- Streamline financial processes and strengthen coordination mechanisms among key stakeholders
- Invest in systematic, long-term capacity building initiatives for MoLG staff, local authorities, and community-based structures
- Strengthen results-based monitoring, evaluation and learning systems
- Deepen the meaningful integration of conflict sensitivity, gender equality, and social inclusion principles across all stages of the project cycle
- Scale up investments in sustainable livelihoods, inclusive value chain development, and decent job creation
- Diversify strategic partnerships with specialized CSOs, private sector actors, and international organizations
- Intensify targeted advocacy efforts with Israeli authorities and the international community
- Develop a multi-donor pooled funding mechanism and aid management platform
- Mainstream climate resilience and environmental sustainability measures into all project components