



الاتحاد الفلسطيني للهيئات المحلية  
Association of Palestinian Local Authorities

**Palestinian City Managers Network (PCMN)**

**Action Plan**

**Establishment of  
Palestinian City Managers Network (PCMN)  
Action Plan**



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Association of Palestinian Local Authorities

# ICMA CODE OF ETHICS

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The mission of ICMA is to create excellence in local governance by developing and fostering professional local government management worldwide. To further this mission, certain principles, as enforced by the Rules of Procedure, shall govern the conduct of every member of ICMA, who shall:

1. Be dedicated to the concepts of effective and democratic local government by responsible elected officials and believe that professional general management is essential to the achievement of this objective.
2. Affirm the dignity and worth of the services rendered by government and maintain a constructive, creative, and practical attitude toward local government affairs and a deep sense of social responsibility as a trusted public servant.
3. Be dedicated to the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships in order that the member may merit the respect and confidence of the elected officials, of other officials and employees, and of the public.
4. Serve the best interests of the people.
5. Submit policy proposals to elected officials; provide them with facts and advice on matters of policy as a basis for making decisions and setting community goals; and uphold and implement local government policies adopted by elected officials.
6. Recognize that elected representatives of the people are entitled to the credit for the establishment of local government policies; responsibility for policy execution rests with the members.
7. Refrain from all political activities which undermine public confidence in professional administrators. Refrain from participation in the election of the members of the employing legislative body.
8. Make it a duty continually to improve the member's professional ability and to develop the competence of associates in the use of management techniques.
9. Keep the community informed on local government affairs; encourage communication between the citizens and all local government officers; emphasize friendly and courteous service to the public; and seek to improve the quality and image of public service.
10. Resist any encroachment on professional responsibilities, believing the member should be free to carry out official policies without interference, and handle each problem without discrimination on the basis of principle and justice.
11. Handle all matters of personnel on the basis of merit so that fairness and impartiality govern a member's decisions pertaining to appointments, pay adjustments, promotions, and discipline.
12. Public office is a public trust. A member shall not leverage his or her position for personal gain or benefit.

*Adopted by the ICMA Executive Board in 1924, and most recently revised by the membership in June 2018.*

## List of Abbreviations:

**APLA:** Association of Palestinian Local Authorities

**PCMN:** Palestinian City Managers Network

**ICMA:** International City/County Management Association

**MoLG:** Ministry of Local Government

**LGU:** Local Government Unit

**MDLF:** Municipal Development and Lending Fund

**VNG:** (Vereniging Nederlandse Gemeenten); Association of Netherlands Municipalities

## Executive Summary:

Municipalities in Palestine are facing various challenges to secure sufficient public services to meet the needs and demands of their inhabitants. The lack of capacities on the local level in addition to other aspects such as ineffective revenue generation and the effects of the Israeli occupation have contributed to negative impacts on planning and provision of services.



One of the key players in local governance in Palestine, as well as in every other country is the City Managers. They sit at the top of the executive team in municipalities, and they are responsible for implementing plans, policies and decisions made by City Councils. In addition, the City

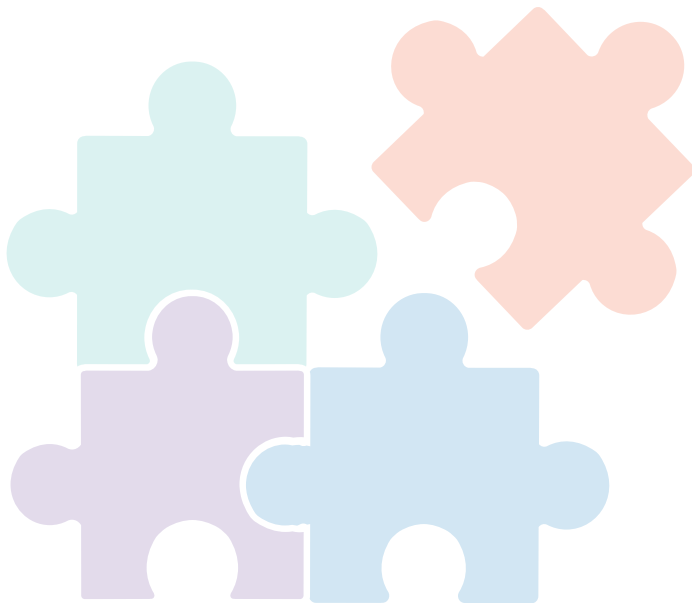
Managers are the linkage between the Staff and Municipal Councils.

Therefore, **the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA)**, as the sole representative of LGUs in Palestine, aims to establish the Palestinian City Managers Network (PCMN), as a unit within the Association, to form an Executive Body to carry out the decisions made by APLA, and to ensure that the policies adopted by the Association will be adopted and implemented in all Municipalities. The PCMN as part of APLA will be responsible for this process. Also, the establishment of this Network aims to strengthen development and reform processes in planning, financial aspects and accountability of LGUs in Palestine, The PCMN will form a parallel mechanism to facilitate exchange, networking and mutual learning for local development in Palestine. And enable partner municipalities to build capacity by discussing topics of relevant and mutual interest and facilitate learning from each other by exchanging good practices. This Network will eventually form the base for qualified candidates from Palestine to join the International City/County Management Association "ICMA".

The purpose of the Action Plan is to provide a road map to build a City Managers Network in Palestine; it sets out the strategies and actions/tactics that the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities “APLA” should adopt to build the Palestinian City Managers Network (PCMN), to build the core Palestinian team to join the International City/County Management Association “ICMA”.

This plan covers the opportunities; objectives, conditions, expected results, challenges, indicators to measure APLAs’ capacity to build the city managers network. It also provides the strategies, tactics, and execution plan.

This plan should be kept under review to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate at all times. It is intended to be a guide to those involved in building the Palestinian City Managers Network, and should develop and change over time according to external challenges and changes in the political and environmental situation in Palestine.



## Country Background:

Palestinian Local Governments represent a key pillar of the future Palestinian state. Pre-dating the Palestinian Government, many of Palestinian Local Governments have long and proud histories, including some of the oldest inhabited cities in the world. With increasing political and geographical fragmentation over the last two decades, Local Government Units (LGUs) have become of paramount importance regarding the provision of services to the local population, particularly in areas where the relatively young central government is politically, geographically, and fiscally constrained. Some existing LGUs were created as early as the second half of the 19th century, and over the decades, they have performed under the complexities of disparate political and legal regimes. As the lowest level of governance, Palestinian local authorities fulfill a critical role, not only as a key public service provider but also as the government tier closest to citizens, with elected councils critical for representation and accountability to citizens. The most recent local elections were on May 13, 2017, and in October 2012, only in the West Bank; while the last elections held Gaza was in 2006.



Local Governments in Palestine are classified to Municipalities and Village Councils based mainly on the number of inhabitants. The Palestinian Government classified the municipalities in three categories according to their population sizes: 'A' municipalities which are the largest cities functioning as governorates centers, 'B' municipalities, which have populations of at least 15,000, and 'C' Level municipalities which have populations less than 15,000. In addition, there is a number of Joint Service Councils (JSCs). JSCs have a legal character and perform one or more service delivery functions for multiple LGUs.

## About APLA:



**The Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA)** is a semi-governmental association that forms a comprehensive framework which holds all the Palestinian local authorities and works for and with them, to provide better services for the Palestinian citizen by defending their rights, and representing them on all levels nationally, regionally, and internationally. The Association was founded on June 19, 1997 in Jerusalem by a presidential decree.

APLA is considered a professional, independent association based on the membership of Palestinian local authorities and plays an important role in building, and developing local authorities.

APLA has set out its role to link local municipalities with international ones, represent, and defend local authorities by using all means and instruments of lobbying and advocacy on the central and legislative authorities and service provider companies to assist the local authorities and be fair with them. Also, it works on the capacity building of the local authorities through the exchange of information and experiences to assist them in certain special fields that contribute to the development of performance of their employees.

APLA is funded through members' annual subscription fees, proceeds of money invested by the Association, any revenues, grants or donations provided, allowance for the administration and implementation of projects in the local authorities and the fees for the services provided by the Association for these authorities.



### APLA's main objectives:

- ▶ To represent the Local Authorities at the local, Arab and international levels.
- ▶ To promote ties and relationships among the Palestinian local authorities
- ▶ To contribute to the development of the Local Authorities' performance by facilitating the exchange of information and experiences among them.
- ▶ To contribute to the coordination of the Local Authorities' position/attitude toward their relationship with the Central Authority.
- ▶ To assist Local Authorities in fields those contribute in developing its employees' performance, through the appropriate training in advanced administrative and technical areas.
- ▶ To develop its members' foreign relationships, and set APLA and the Local Authorities at the appropriate position among the international organizations.
- ▶ To use all means and instruments of lobbying and advocacy on the central and legislative authorities and services providers to assist and just Local Authorities.

## DEVELOPMENT PROBLEM



### Problem Statement:

LGUs in Palestine are facing various challenges to secure sufficient public services to meet the needs and demands of their inhabitants. The lack of capacities on the local level in addition to other aspects such as ineffective revenue generation and the effects of the Israeli occupation have contributed to negative impacts on planning and provision of services.

One of the key players in local governance in Palestine, as well as in every other country is the City Managers. They sit at the top of the Executive team in municipalities, and they are responsible for the implementation of plans, policies and decisions made by City Councils. In addition, the city managers are the linkage between the municipal staff and municipal councils.



### Development Hypothesis:

Building on this problem statement, APLA as the sole representative of LGUs in Palestine proposes the following development theory:

Establishing the Palestinian City Managers Network (PCMN), as a unit within the Association, to form an Executive body to carry out the decisions made by APLA, and to improve municipal fiscal sustainability and service delivery, will make local governments more accountable and effective, strengthen the development of LGUs and build the capacity of LGUs staff.



through participatory community planning and increase collection rates for services provided. The City Manager will identify the specific services and functions which mostly need improvement in each LGU. APLA will provide the needed technical assistance and support, to improve the delivery of municipal services, and LGUs’ effective performance of core functions.

APLA will improve social accountability and oversight, and strengthen LGU transparency measures through the City Managers. The PCMN will also improve LGU transparency and public disclosure, strengthen and institutionalize citizen participation, by ensuring the participation of the youth, particularly local councils, in local economic development planning and support initiatives focused on this theme.



## Objective #2:

**To support peer to peer learning on aspects of planning and finances and build capacity by making use of good practice and innovative approaches:**

APLA will deepen the capacity building efforts for the eligible City Managers, through improving and sustaining collaborative relationships with international and local associations and affiliates to support, align, and advance common goals.

City managers with the support of APLA will identify capacity-building efforts that ultimately enhance LGUs’ capacity to deliver services; and improve LGU staff capacities in fiscal management, local economic development, and civic engagement. APLA will adopt a long-term coaching and training approach to achieve these objectives.



### Objective #3:

**To foster policy dialogue with relevant representatives of the national government such as the MoLG by articulating and advancing interests of municipal concern:**

APLA will engage the PCMN in working with MoLG and other relevant representatives to ensure the sustainability of the capacity-building interventions, and the transfer of the knowledge and successful approaches to national institutions.

PCMN will join APLA in regular meetings with MoLG to address their concerns, challenges and objectives, an open dialogue policy will be adopted with all relevant national institutions to enhance the LGUs performance, transparency, and accountability.

Semiannual reports will be published by APLA about the performance and achievements of PCMN and distributed to all relevant parties.



### Objective #4:

**To foster exchange and consolidate relations with relevant national international stakeholders for enhanced cooperation:**

APLA will facilitate the sharing of experience and cooperation among the local and international stakeholders, this will be achieved by forming a qualified PCMN that is capable to plan and manage the implementation of APLA's programs that contribute to the implementation of policies for local government sector.

APLA will conduct regular meetings for PCMN to share experience, knowledge, challenges and common goals. PCMN as part of APLA will attend the thematic groups meetings to enhance the cooperation with all relevant parties and to ensure that Local government units have institutional systems in line with the policies of local government sector and the principles of good governance.





### Objective #5:

#### **To clarify roles and responsibilities of Palestinian LGUs:**

APLA will focus on key statutory (local authorities law) and policy reforms that better define the roles and responsibilities of LGUs and the financing mechanisms to support economic development and municipal service provision. The PCMN through the support of APLA will work to expand the LGUs' mandate and capacities to collect property tax in large municipalities, and work with MoLG and LGUs to introduce new fees and taxes to the extent possible.

On the other hand, PCMN will support the LGUs in defining clear roles and responsibilities for each department and ensure smooth and effective performance among the LGU level; each City Manager will focus on the implementation level while the Municipality Mayor will work on the strategic level and general policies.



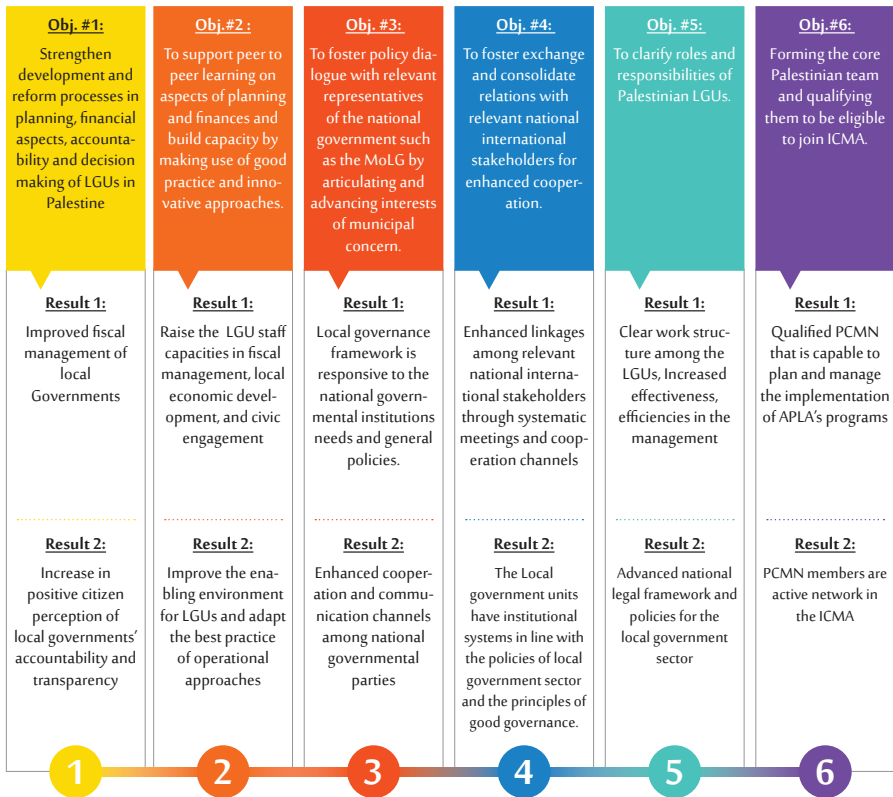
### Objective #6:

#### **Forming the core Palestinian team and qualifying them to be eligible to join ICMA:**

APLA will launch the announcement of PCMN, with clear mandate and objectives to LGUs and governmental sector, based on that, eligibility criteria will be considered to accept the City Managers memberships. A series of systematic and intensive meetings, workshops, and trainings will be provided to the PCMN to enhance their capabilities and ensure full understanding, and practicing of governmental best practices locally, regionally, and internationally. The proposed timeline is one year in order to be qualified to join the ICMA.

## PCMN Results Framework

Project goal: Establish a comprehensive network within APLA to carry out the strategies and policies adopted by APLA; to ensure that the policies adopted by the Association will be implemented in all Municipalities



## Mapping Stakeholders



## Strategies:

### Approach, actions and timeline

The ultimate goal of PCMN is to establish a comprehensive network within APLA to carry out the strategies and policies adopted by APLA; to ensure that the policies adopted by the Association will be implemented in all Municipalities, and qualify the Palestinian city managers to join ICMA. To achieve this goal, the plan will be divided into 2 phases.

**Phase1:** Establishing PCMN.

**Phase2:** Joining ICMA.



1. **Preparation and consulting with Palestinian Cities Managers:** this stage will focus mainly to develop the general framework of the network and identifying the policies and main objectives of the network. At this stage, the constitutive committee of PCMN will be selected, comprised of 5 city managers. This team will be deeply involved in identifying the mandate of the network, objectives, goals and the network roles and activities.
2. **Consulting with ICMA:** deep discussions with ICMA shall take place in order to explore their experience as the leading international city managers association. This process will also aim at exploring the possible mutual cooperation between APLA and ICMA in order to foster PCMN, and engaging PCMN members in ICMA’s international projects. In addition to explore developing specific mutual projects between PCMN and ICMA. Besides that these consultations will be considered as a pre requirement to qualify the Palestinian city managers to join ICMA.
3. **Legalizing PCMN:** to ensure the full support for the members of PCMN, the PCMN shall be approved and adopted by the Executive Committee of APLA (Board of Directors). The Executive Committee shall deeply engage in defining the mandate, goals and objectives of PCMN before establishing

it, to ensure the full support for it by APLAs’ decision makers. Adopting the establishment of PCMN as a unit within APLA in APLAs’ strategic plan will secure the required support and commitment, as well as the financial resources requires for PCMN.

4. **Large scale consultation with the stakeholders:** several meetings and workshops with all related stakeholders shall be organized, this action aims mainly to clarify the purpose behind establishing PCMN, discussing on a large scale all related topics regarding PCMN, and insuring the largest participation of the stakeholders in order to enhance the ownership for the network among all stakeholders, especially cities managers. At this stage a wide participation from the mayors will be insured, to clarify the relationship between PCMN and APLA, and to clarify the different roles between the mayors and the city managers.
5. **Identifying the managing team for PCMN:** a coordination committee for PCMN shall be selected among the Palestinian city managers, this committee will be selected by the Palestinian city managers, comprised by (5-7) of them, and shall be approved by the Executive Committee. A coordinator of the unit shall be hired to perform the different tasks of the unit. The coordination committee, the unit coordinator and the Executive Director of APLA will form the managing body of PCMN.
6. **Launching PCMN:** this is foreseen to take place at the end of this action plan, launching PCMN is planned to happen before the end of year 2018, and will officially announce the establishment and existence of PCMN. Immediately after this announcement, PCMN will start carrying out its responsibilities, and launch its strategic planning process, and developing the action plan.

 **Financial Resources:** APLA - ICMA - Donors fund for projects.

## || Potential Challenges and ways to overcome:



### Competition between the Mayors and City Managers:

This challenge will be tackled through clear roles and responsibilities for both positions. APLA will enhance the interactive and complementary professional relationship between the mayor and the manager, and ensure the clarity of implementation role of the cities managers, which will enable the mayors to fulfill their duties at the strategic level. APLA will take the lead in advocating the LGUs about the importance of cities manager's role. This approach will be complemented with other plans within APLA to overcome this challenge.



### Clear differences in terms of capacities and potentials of different cities managers:

**APLA will work intensively at raising the capacity of cities managers at two levels as follow:**

1. **Cross – National level:** This will focus on the mutual needs and goals of all members.
2. **Individual level:** This will be tailored according to the needs and capacities of each member.



### The absence of the position of municipal director in many Palestinian municipalities:

APLA will enhance and support the current cities managers, create an active network that is highly qualified to implement the association strategies at best practice governmental standards. The success of this network will be a role model for the rest of LGUs to create and actively fill this position at their structure.





### **Securing the required funds to sustain this network:**

APLA will depend on the membership fees (municipalities' annual fees) in addition to donors' participation. The majority of trainings and capacity building courses locally and internationally will be part of APLA's strategic plan and through its linkages with relevant stakeholders at governmental sector. Besides that, the partnership between APLA and ICMA will secure sufficient fund for the proposed projects for this network.



### **Municipality's commitment towards APLA's positions and decisions:**


APLA has taken several steps in reforming its mandate with key governmental institutions and stakeholders as MoLG, MDLF, VNG, GIZ and others. The association has achieved major achievements during the last year, especially in terms of unified representation and lobbying on behalf the collective interest of LGUs in Palestine, these achievements have enhanced the authority and credibility of APLA. The PCMN will form an additional driver to enhance the commitment of the members.




### **Encourage the directors of the Palestinian municipalities to abide by their responsibilities and duties towards the network and allocate part of their busy time for this purpose:**

APLA will take the lead in advocating the LGUs directors about the PCMN objectives, roles and responsibilities, which will play a key role in the success of their municipalities. Building a professional relationship with municipalities' directors based on trust and cooperation will be a milestone in the success of PCMN.

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