



الاتحاد الفلسطيني للهيئات المحلية
Association of Palestinian Local Authorities

APLA's Strategic Plan Summary 2023 – 2027



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Foreword

I am honoured and privileged to present to my colleague mayors of local government units (LGUs) and partners at the Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) the APLA Strategic Plan 2023-2027. We have based ourselves on ambitious visions and aspirations to produce a document, which highlights our commitment to promoting local government and our faith in the transformative power and capability of our LGUs to achieve development and lead bottom-up change.

At the APLA, we seek to support Palestinian LGUs and priorities for local action to provide the best services to our citizens under difficult and complex circumstances. To this end, we have developed comprehensive and sustainable development strategies and policies, taking into account the particular situation in Palestine. While upholding Palestinian rights, these support Palestinian LGUs and institutions to create better conditions, strengthen the resilience of Palestinians on their land, expose practices of the Israeli occupying authorities, convey the current reality to Western societies, play a lobbying role on the international stage in support of our Palestinian cause, and challenge Israeli practices at all levels.

The recent war on Gaza has left scars on our faith in humanity and international conventions, which claim to ensure human rights. We, therefore, need to put in place strategies that enhance resilience, not only promoting physical infrastructure, but also addressing the very essence of our shared humanity. Real resilience lies in our hearts and in our ability to rise from the ashes of destruction, rebuild not only homes but also hope, and reconstruct not only streets but also solidarity. The core of our strength resides in promoting relations between communities, foster mutual understanding and action for a shared humanity beyond borders and above differences.

Our Palestinian LGUs have demonstrated resilience after decades of hard work under a crippling occupation and ongoing state of emergency. They have played a crucial role in addressing challenges and making the most of unique opportunities within our Palestinian communities. They have opted for strategies that tackle the concerns, fulfil the needs, and improve the resilience of citizens.

In APLA, we recognise the amount of responsibility placed on our LGUs and the emerging needs of the next phase. This requires concerted efforts and strengthened commitment to national unity as a leadership, institutions, and people. It also requires creating space for grassroots level, starting from our LGUs that are better able to rebuild what has been destroyed by the Israeli occupying authorities.

Abdul Karim al-Zubeidi
APLA President



Introduction

Throughout history, Palestinian LGUs have played a vital role in shaping the Palestinian national identity and advancing statehood aspirations, and translated the national project into reality. To fulfil and deliver social, development, and organisational responsibilities and services, respond to the various needs of Palestinian citizens and promote their resilience on their land. Strengthened roles and powers will keep LGUs highly prepared, ensure sustainable basic service delivery to Palestinian communities, and inspire potential change and capability of achieving development and leading bottom-up change.

The institutional structure that supports LGUs mainly involves the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) and its directorate district offices, APLA, and Municipal Development and Lending Fund (MDLF).

Strengthening the powers of, and defending, LGUs was one of the major reasons for establishing APLA in 1997. As a national institution encompasses all Palestinian LGUs, represents the collective interests of LGUs, provides lobbying and advocacy in support of LGU capacities, and facilitates the exchange of information and best practices among LGUs. It operates as a channel of dialogue between the central government and LGUs across Palestine.

APLA's strategic planning reflects its commitment to enhancing LGU capacities. The previous planning cycle saw institutional strengthening, networking, and program implementation, bolstered by internal elections in early 2023. The Strategic Plan 2023-2027 aims to build on past achievements, optimize outputs, and solidify APLA's role as a leading actor in Palestinian local governance.

APLA management has successfully reinstated APLA as a key player in the Palestinian local government sector. Over 95% of interventions outlined in the APLA Strategic Plan 2019-2022 were executed, with some surpassing initial plans. This progress has bolstered confidence among LGUs and donors, resulting in increased funding and resources.

To develop this document, APLA has been informed by the decree on its establishment, APLA Bylaws, achievements made during the previous strategic planning cycle, and expected opportunities and challenges. APLA has further held extensive consultations with relevant bodies both internally and externally. Eventually, APLA has compiled the strategic framework 2023-2027, plan of action, and logical framework of priority programmes to achieve its strategic objectives in line with the local government sector goals as well as national and global agendas.



Background of the local government sector in Palestine

Local government sector forms the backbone of public administration and basic service provision in Palestine. The local government sector comprises LGUs, which serve as the first focal point with the public. Based on the complementary role of each, three institutions provide support to LGUs, namely, the MoLG, MDLF, and APLA.

The Law on Palestinian Local Government Units No. 1 of 1997, as amended, vests LGUs with the responsibility for providing 27 basic services. Setting the legal framework that regulates the local government sector in Palestine, the law provides for establishing LGUs that enjoy a juridical personality and financial independence. LGUs are managed by elected councils, with a number of members in proportion to the population of respective communities. With defined mandates and financial resources, LGUs are assigned with substantial roles, namely:

1. Provision of basic infrastructure and other public services;
2. An organizational and development role; and
3. A development role.

The LGUs Law lays down the basis of the working relationship between LGUs and the central government, represented by the MoLG. It gives the central government broad powers, mainly to make the public policies of LGU councils, supervise LGU powers and mandates, monitor the regulation of public projects, etc. The Law on the Election of Councils of Local Government Units No. 10 of 2005, as amended, governs the election and formation of LGU councils. The latter is the second law with relevance to the local government sector in Palestine.

Palestinian LGU powers are primarily limited to providing and managing water, sanitation, solid waste, and electricity supply services, street and city planning, and public market regulation. LGUs do not hold effective powers in the education sector, social development, or health services. Due to the limited administrative powers set by their working relationship with the MoLG and overlapping powers in the local government sector, other regulations give these powers to other bodies, such as governor offices, ministries, and ministry directorates.

The margin allowed for LGUs to impose taxes and fees is extremely limited, with no difference between large and small LGUs. This places restrictions on and limits operations of LGUs to the provision of basic services. Of note, service delivery does not fully fall within the mandate of the local government sector. It is also shared with a number of line ministries, non-ministerial government bodies, and civil society organizations. Additionally, LGU development role is restricted to the coordination of development projects, which are financed and managed by other institutions.



In brief, challenges and obstacles faced by Palestinian LGUs can be summed up as follows:

1. Outdated laws and regulations on functions of the local government sectors. Some legislations even date back to the British Mandate and Jordanian rule periods.
2. Progressive removal of LGU powers, starting with the withdrawal of responsibility for electricity distribution and ending with the expected revocation of powers to provide water supply and sanitation services. Clearly, line ministries and non-ministerial government bodies encroach on many LGU responsibilities and powers. This is triggered by the lack of clear action policies that govern and outline the working relationship between different components of the local government sector and other government bodies.
3. Low LGU revenues, including claims against the government, dwindling international support, and failure to benefit from all revenue sources prescribed by the legislation in force.
4. Poor public commitment to meeting financial obligations to LGUs as a result of hard economic conditions, widespread poverty and unemployment, and other community-related causes.
5. Weak technical capacities to implement required projects. Capacity building needs to be provided to some LGUs to help them implement vital projects. The capacities of LGU council members should also be strengthened to manage strong LGUs.



About APLA

Established in 1997, APLA is an independent institution that brings together all LGUs. APLA is mandated with representing the collective interests of LGUs, providing lobbying and advocacy in support of LGU capacities, and facilitating the exchange of information and best practices among LGUs. APLA further serves as a channel of dialogue between the central government and LGUs across Palestine with a view to enabling them to provide better services to Palestinian citizens. To this avail, APLA defends the rights of and represents LGUs at all national, regional, and international levels.

According to the APLA Bylaws, APLA has three levels of membership. First, the General Assembly consists of all members who pay their membership fees. Second, the Administrative Board is elected by the General Assembly and comprises 47 elected members. Third, the Executive Committee consists of 25 members, who are elected by the Administrative Board. These include 17 members as permanent representatives of LGUs at the centres of governorates, two members from the southern governorates, and six members from the northern governorates (two members from the centre, two from the north, and two from the south).

Financial sustainability of APLA poses a challenge that requires innovative measures. The APLA revenue sources mainly generate from the collection of membership fees, income from investments, and any revenues, grants or donations provided to APLA. According to the APLA Financial Sustainability Plan, financial resources can potentially come from project management and implementation within LGUs as well as from fees of services delivered by APLA to respective members.

Although the years before 2016/2017 included challenges and weaknesses that undermined the confidence of members, partners, and donors. However, considerable efforts have been made to re-position APLA on the map of the local government sector in Palestine. Today, APLA takes its rightful place as the real and reliable representative of LGUs. APLA was restructured, and its previous strategic planning cycle implemented over 90 percent of set interventions, effectively restoring full confidence in the Association and its role in support of LGUs to provide inclusive and sustainable services. APLA has worked in full partnership with relevant institutions, first and foremost the MoLG and MDLF.

In light of the progress made by APLA, to maintain the momentum of achievements and score more successes based on the previous strategic plan, the APLA management has been determined to develop the APLA Strategic Plan 2023-2027. This is an ambitious plan that identifies APLA programmes of action and materializes its vision and strategic objectives in line with the principles of good governance, strategic goals of the Local Government Sector Strategy, and national and global priorities and agendas.



SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- APLA enjoys a legal standing as representative of Palestinian LGUs. The fact that it is established under a presidential decree as an elected professional institution vests APLA with the legal capacity and support to defend the rights of and provide effective representation of member in various forums.
- Highly professional elections of the APLA boards provide APLA with a strong momentum to communicate with government and international bodies.
- APLA enjoys credibility to represent LGU interests. APLA is considered as a platform that scales up cooperation and mutual support among LGUs.
- Clear governance, institutionalization, and organizational structure draw a dividing line between the APLA Executive Committee and executive staff, clearly delimiting powers and responsibilities of each and avoiding contradictory decision-making and implementation under a defined framework.
- A clear mechanism is in place to follow up on the decisions made by the Executive Committee and Administrative Board. This involves the documentation of meeting minutes and implementation of relevant outcomes. Periodic reports are submitted on the status of the decisions made.
- Establishing an organizational structure and detailed operating procedures in financial and personnel management, and setting clear plans (strategic plan, project and technical unit plans, financial sustainability plan, communication strategy, etc.).
- APLA enjoys a wide network of partnerships at all local, regional and international levels.

Weaknesses

- Unclear definition of the APLA General Assembly under the APLA Bylaws. There is, therefore, a pressing need to re-examine membership.
- Failure to hold central and periodic General Assembly meetings. Instead, meetings are only convened at the centre of governorates level.
- Lack of a procedure manual, which makes clear the mechanisms of service provision to members who pay or fail to pay membership fees.
- Overlapping powers and responsibilities given to the APLA General Assembly, Administrative Committee, and Executive Committee.
- Limited understanding by the Executive Committee members of their relationship with APLA and responsibilities as representatives of LGUs. These members need to ensure that collective interests prevail over any individual interests or needs of their own LGUs.
- The employment system on temporary contracts funded by projects prevails over the permanent employment system for APLA staff due to limited sustainable financial resources.
- Poor APLA database of LGUs.



- Lack of a study on the impact of capacity building programmes implemented throughout the local government sector.
- Lack of institutionalized working relationships with government bodies. Cooperation can be enhanced with these bodies by building on the existing partnership with the MoLG.
- Low collections of membership fees from the APLA members as LGUs refrain from fulfilling financial obligations to APLA.
- High annual operating costs incurred by APLA due to limited sustainable financial resources.

Opportunities

- It is recommended that APLA opt for lines of activities that provide an income source with a view to improve service provision to members by
 1. Providing advisory services to LGUs; and
 2. Developing programmes (in partnership with donors) for sustainable development, climate change, disaster and crisis risk management.
- Approve the law on public-private partnership, while providing ample opportunity to enforce the law on the ground.
- Promote strategic partnerships with academic institutions to encourage them to offer courses and publish studies and research papers on the local government sector.
- Build on the success scored by APLA in project and programme implementation.
- Strengthen, invigorate and expand cooperation and partnership built by APLA with counterparts around the world.
- Consider APLA as a main point of reference and destination for LGUs.
- Invest and build on the achievements made through the Municipal Technical Exchange Hubs.
- Developing the Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Localization in Palestine.
- Make use of the sub-grants project to strengthen the relationship between APLA and village councils.



Challenges

- Difficult access to village councils due to limited resources and capacities.
- Lack of financial sustainability within APLA.
- Poor awareness among LGUs of the central and realistic role, effectiveness, and added value of APLA.
- APLA is not perceived as a key reference point, when line ministries and non-ministerial government bodies draft and make laws and policies relating to the local government sector. APLA engagement in this process is only limited to the partnership with MoLG.
- Increasing government centralization of LGUs functions.
- Need to amend the systems, laws and policies relating to the local government sector.

Top Priorities

In light of the SWOT analysis, key issues which APLA needs to take into consideration over the upcoming stage, mainly:

- Continue to promote the institutional and legal structure of APLA.
- Strengthen the financial resources of APLA.
- Promote the role of LGUs in providing public services and contributing to increasing financial resources of LGUs.
- Enhance public trust in LGUs.
- Support and promote citizens' resilience in the so-called Area "C".
- Make efforts to localize SDGs in all LGU aspects of work.
- Promote legal and policy lobbying and advocacy to defend LGU rights.
- Improve the exchange of experience and networking both locally and internationally.
- Raise awareness of LGUs on the role of, and boost confidence in, APLA as a representative and defender of their issues and interests.
- Expand networking, mobilize support, and implement projects.
- Bolster strategic partnerships with local and international academic institutions.



Summary of APLA achievements in 2019-2022

The APLA Strategic Plan 2019-2022 cycle witnessed many obstacles. Most notably, the COVID-19 pandemic affected all aspects of public work. Harsh political, economic, and social conditions which faced the Palestinian people also posed a significant challenge to LGUs in general, and to APLA in particular. As the pandemic gains ground, financing was relatively reduced due to the reprioritisation of planned activities and needs. In spite of these difficulties, APLA has accomplished major aspects of the strategic plan adopted in 2018. Below is a summary of the most prominent achievements:

At the institutional level:

- Upgraded and approved the APLA Bylaws.
- Developed and approved the APLA organizational structure.
- Compiled and approved five operating procedure manuals.
- Developed an e-archiving system and computerized database.
- Developed and approved a manual on gender mainstreaming into the APLA activities.
- Improved, upgraded and promoted the image of APLA through multiple public relations instruments.
- Increased membership fee collection up to 68 percent and raised the number of staff to 13.
- Improved member satisfaction with APLA from 50 to 75 percent.

At the service level:

- Launched six hubs to share experience among LGUs and organized over 50 workshops.
- Supported 10 economic development initiatives launched by LGUs.
- Held numerous of training sessions and activities that targeted LGU staff.
- Launched more than 100 campaigns on social media platforms.
- Established four sector task forces and 10 temporary sector committees.
- Developed and reviewed more than 50 regulations and internal procedures within LGUs.

At the level of lobbying advocacy, and defence of LGU interests:

- Participated in the development of over 20 policies and pieces of legislation with relevance to the local government sector.
- Concluded seven memorandums of understanding with Arab and international institutions and forums.
- Built partnerships with three academic institutions.
- Reviewed and edited seven twinning agreements between LGUs.
- Facilitated the official participation of APLA members in over 100 international events.



Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

The United Nations approved the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a global call to action to eradicate poverty, safeguard the environment, and guarantee that, by 2030, everyone lives in peace and prosperity. The 17 SDGs prioritise human rights and strikes a balance between social justice, economic progress, and environmental protection. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda) identifies five thematic areas: people, planet, prosperity, peace and partnership – the 5 P's of the SDGs.

The 2030 Agenda provides a road map for societies and states to achieve more symmetrical and equitable development. For the Palestinian people, sustainable development implies independence, economic growth, social justice, rule of law, inclusive and quality education, accessible, integrated and good-quality health care, a society capable of resilience and development, and a better future for both the current generation and those yet to come.

The SDG localization process involves an examination of the domestic context and implementation of the 2030 Agenda. It starts with setting targets and objectives and ends with selecting implementation strategies and using indicators to measure and monitor progress. The 2030 Agenda incorporates the compilation, implementation and supervision of local plans to achieve sustainable development goals and targets at regional, national, and local levels.

SDGs Localization: Think Global, Act Local

The 2030 Agenda is clearly embedded in the roles played by LGUs. Localization of SDGs is an outcome of the unrelenting efforts made by LGUs, relevant unions, and urban communities. It a major step ahead to recognize the potential and ability of LGUs to achieve development and lead global changes in a decentralized, bottom-up approach, as it is in the best position to connect SDGs to local communities.

The term "SDGs localization" refers to the process of taking into account regional and local contexts in achieving the 2030 Agenda, starting from setting goals and objectives and ending with identifying means of implementation and using indicators to measure and monitor progress. In other words, SDG localization refers to the roles that LGUs play in supporting the achievement of SDG at the national level, and how the Sustainable Development Agenda can be used as a framework of action for the local development process.

APLA has recognized the critical role of LGUs in addressing challenges and making the most of unique opportunities within respective communities. And the importance of aligning its plans and strategies to ensure that the ambitious sustainable development goals are placed at the heart of the LGUs policies and strategies. Along this vein, APLA has developed the Plan for the Localization of Sustainable Development Goals in Palestinian LGUs in order to enhance the adaptation and implementation of initiatives at the local level and create appropriate tools and techniques to localize sustainable development goals.



APLA's Localization Plan of Sustainable Development Goals in Palestinian LGUs

APLA plays a central role in localizing SDGs and calling for the adoption of strategies for inclusive and sustainable development at the local level, ensuring that development is achieved throughout communities. In pursuit of empowering, promoting and incentivising LGUs to achieve SDGs, APLA took the initiative to produce a comprehensive strategy that strikes a sustainable balance in all facets of development. To this avail, APLA fully coordinates with various parties, ensures an integrated flow of work with LGUs and local communities, and guides all programmes and initiatives towards priorities that reinforce sustainable development at the national or regional level.

The SDGs Localization Plan reflects a programme of action grounded in the spirit of collaboration and provides a deeper understanding of management practices to adopt and implement SDGs. The plan involves four strategic objectives:

- Strategic objective 1: Increase awareness on SDGs
- Strategic objective 2: Advocacy for LGUs contribution to the SDGs
- Strategic objective 3: Implement the SDGs
- Strategic objective 4: Monitor and evaluate the achievement of the SDGs

The SDG Localisation Plan is informed by three critical questions, which collectively provide a transformative road map that stimulates and guides the LGUs course of action towards achieving ambitions objectives and targets:

1. How can the SDGs framework be localized through an integrated approach to sustainability management in Palestine?
2. What challenges can be identified when having an integrated approach in municipal SDGs implementation in Palestine?
3. What are the approaches, tools, mechanisms, resources, activities are required to support the localization of SDGs in Palestine?

The SDG Localization Plan lists key interventions that contribute Palestine's commitment to the 2030 Agenda, empower the role of LGUs to align their plans and strategies so that they respond to the concepts of management and sustainable development. In the context of strategic objectives, these interventions are as follows:

Strategic objective 1: Increase awareness on SDGs

- Provide awareness raising and capacity building to LGUs staff on SDGs.
- Guide and support LGUs to localize SDGs in relevant activities and plans.
- Support LGUs in awareness raising campaigns concerning SDGs.
- Provide awareness and capacity building to local communities and citizens on SDGs.



Strategic objective 2: Advocacy for LGUs contribution to the SDGs

- Developing a legal and policy framework to materialize democracy and respect for human rights.
- Strengthening powers of LGUs as autonomous entities that enjoy legal capacities, financial independence, and clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Promote decentralization and apply multi-level management approaches and stakeholder partnerships.
- Develop the system of financial transfers from the central government to LGUs to strike a balance between assigned tasks and available resources.
- Activating the legal framework for LGUs tax collection and disbursements to ensure effective implementation.
- Enhance the ability of LGUs and empower them to maximise contributions, taking account of limited resources and powers.
- Approve procedures for monitoring and evaluating LGUs performance with a view to address weaknesses.

Strategic objective 3: Implement the SDGs

- Align LGU plans and strategies with SDG targets.
- Launch the SDG localization process within LGUs.
- Direct and mobilize local resources to localize the 2030 Agenda.
- Provide capacity building to local and community leaders to support the SDGs localization process.

Strategic objective 4: Monitor and evaluate the achievement of the SDGs

- Create an effective institutional foundation to monitor, supervise and document the SDGs localization process.
- Activate partnerships to access priority information on SDG targets.
- Support the monitoring process and produce needed reports.





APLA has launched the SDGs portal, which serves as a major platform for documenting LGUs contributions to achieving SDGs. The portal is designed to create a dynamic and engaging experience for Participants from all Palestinian Municipalities and Local partners. It aims to foster active participation, knowledge sharing, and collaboration to make a positive impact on sustainable development efforts in Palestine.

The platform reviews the actions that will be implemented locally; To constitute a reference for reviewing the progress made by the LGUs on the one hand, in addition to an electronic system that provides APLA with the tools that help manage LGUs localization practices based on LGU key performance indicators and statistics, with the aim of maintaining the actions of local actors to take measures towards achieving The 2030 SDGs, identifying local indicators and adopting an advanced reporting system by which data is collected from LGUs based on their contribution to achieving the global agenda.

• Palestinian SDGs Localization Platform

This platform seeks to promote all 17 SDGs and highlight the need to further develop and invest in LGUs with a view to achieving these goals. It strengthens both public and LGUs ownership of SDGs, provides information and news on local processes and contributions to achieving SDGs, and posts news and data about APLA's interventions and practices in the SDGs localisation process.

• Data management system

The data management system (DMS) will serve as a platform of all data on sustainable strategies implemented by Palestinian LGUs. The DMS is based on LGU-specific key performance indicators and statistics.



Objectives of developing and upgrading the Strategic Plan

Main objective: Contribute to improving APLA's operational performance to enhance the delivery of services provided to LGUs in particular, and to bolster its overall role within the local government sector.

Sub-objectives:

1. Develop an informed roadmap for the APLA work in 2023-2027 by setting strategic objectives and compiling plans of action in order to achieve APLA's vision and mission.
2. Activate stakeholder participation, including from APLA boards, in define the future directions of APLA.
3. Adopt an effective tool to promote APLA's development programmes both internally and externally as well as mobilize funding to support implementation of these programmes.

Methodology for the preparation and upgrading of the Strategic Plan

The methodology of APLA Strategic Plan embraces a purely comprehensive and consultative approach to ensure that all stakeholders are engaged in and fully own the strategic planning process, including APLA members and partners, particularly Palestinian LGUs. The following methodology has been used to develop this Strategic Plan:

1. Review of documents, studies, and plans of partners in the local government sector: All primary and secondary data, reports, documents were collected, reviewed and analysed.
2. Consultations: Preparatory meetings were held with the APLA President, Executive Director, staff, Executive Committee members, and other stakeholders, including APLA members, experts, specialists, and key partners (MoLG and MDLF) to discuss the scope of the Strategic Plan. These identified challenges, highlighted opportunities at hand, and set the way APLA should take to move forward.
3. Drafting of the first draft of the Strategic Plan: Following analysis, consultations and feedback received from different stakeholders, APLA produced the first draft of the Strategic Plan, including specific and achievable strategic objectives, programmes and interventions. The first draft sketched an outline of the most pressing issues handled by APLA, identified gaps to be addressed, and highlighted opportunities to make maximum use of.
4. Verification: APLA organised a second round of consultations on the first draft, involving groups discussions and meetings with the APLA Administrative Board members. These consultations were tailored to verify the direction suggested in the draft and receive constructive inputs to further develop and refine the document.
5. Preparing the final version of the APLA Strategic Plan 2023-2027.



APLA's strategic framework

Vision

LGUs are capable of providing inclusive and sustainable services within an enabling environment and good local governance.

Mission

APLA is the official elected national umbrella that strives to represent and support the Palestinian LGUs, and advocates for their interests and rights to develop and reach their independence in line with the National Policy Agenda and in accordance with good governance principles and contributes to achieving a greater level of justice, inclusion and sustainability.

APLA strategic goals and objectives

Goal 1: Promote governance and performance at APLA

Strategic objectives:

- Strategic objective 1: Develop APLA's institutional performance
- Strategic objective 2: Promote APLA's financial sustainability

Goal 2: Contribute to enabling LGUs to provide equitable and inclusive services to citizens

Strategic objectives

- Strategic objective 3: Contribute to improving LGU performance to provide equitable and inclusive services
- Strategic objective 4: Contribute to strengthening LGU financial stability
- Strategic objective 5: Increase citizens' engagement in LGU functions
- Strategic objective 6: Contribute to strengthening the capacities of LGUs in the so-called Area C
- Strategic objective 7: Support preparedness for SDGs localization in LGUs
- Strategic objective 8: Support recovery and reconstruction efforts of LGUs in the Gaza Strip

Goal 3: Represent and defend LGU interests and issues at all national, regional and international levels

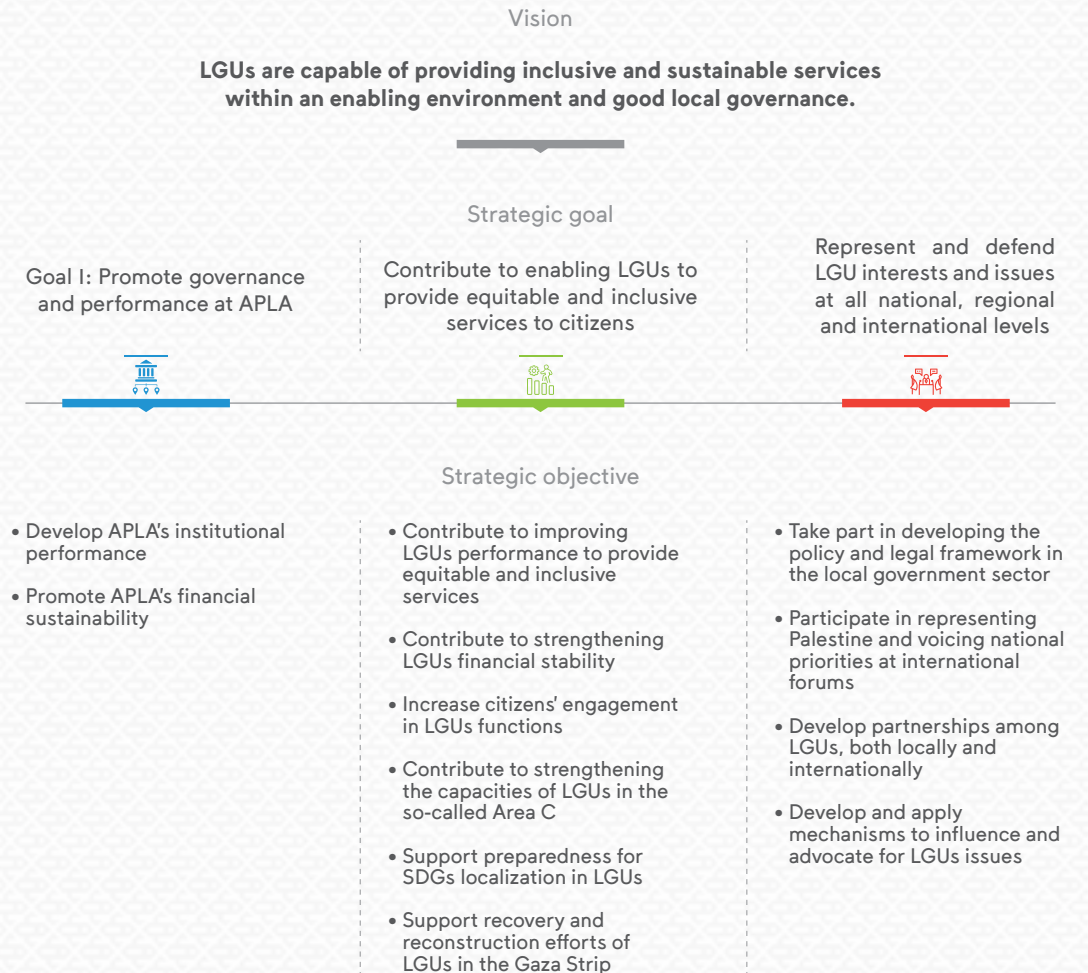
- Strategic objective 9: Take part in developing the policy and legal framework in the local government sector
- Strategic objective 10: Participate in representing Palestine and voicing national priorities at international forums
- Strategic objective 11: Develop partnerships among LGUs, both locally and internationally
- Strategic objective 12: Develop and apply mechanisms to influence and advocate for LGUs issues



APLA institutional values

1. Integrity
2. Effectiveness
3. Credibility
4. Accountability
5. Commitment
6. Initiative-taking
7. Loyalty
8. Entrepreneurship
9. Transparency and disclosure
10. Justice and inclusion

Strategic framework elements



Linkages between the APLA strategic goals and objectives, targets of the Local Government Sector Strategy, and national priorities

Today, APLA takes its rightful place as a key partner in the local government sector in Palestine, forming part of national, regional and global partnerships and initiatives. Hence, the APLA Strategic Plan 2023-2027 intersects closely with the targets of the Local Government Sector Strategy 2024-2029 and national priorities outlined in the National Development Agenda 2024-2029; "Reform and Promotion of Resilience towards Independence". In the local government sector, the APLA role is focused on creating new development dynamics; its a top priority of both the APLA and the Palestinian government to promote and empower LGUs to perform their functions and tasks to the fullest extent.

The table below show linkages between the objectives and targets of Local Government Sector Strategy and priorities of the National Development Agenda 2024-2029.

APLA strategic goals	APLA strategic objectives	Goals of the Local Government Sector Strategy			Priorities of the National Development Agenda 2024-2029			
		Develop financial resources and stimulate economic development at LGUs	Promote urban growth and improve the quality and inclusive coverage of infrastructure	Empower and strengthen capacities of LGUS and MoLG within the framework of good local governance	Promote resistance-based resilience	Strengthen the production base of the Palestinian economy towards disengagement from the occupation	Reform and improve the quality of public institutions and services	Promote the Palestinian narrative
Promote governance and performance at APLA	Develop APLAs institutional performance	✓					✓	
	Promote APLAs financial sustainability	✓					✓	

APLA strategic goals	APLA strategic objectives	Goals of the Local Government Sector Strategy			Priorities of the National Development Agenda 2024-2029			
		Develop financial resources and stimulate economic development at LGUs	Promote urban growth and improve the quality and inclusive coverage of infrastructure	Empower and strengthen capacities of LGUS and MoLG within the framework of good local governance	Promote resistance-based resilience	Strengthen the production base of the Palestinian economy towards disengagement from the occupation	Reform and improve the quality of public institutions and services	Promote the Palestinian narrative
Contribute to enabling LGUs to provide equitable and inclusive services to citizens	Contribute to improving LGUs performance to provide equitable and inclusive services	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
	Contribute to strengthening LGUs financial stability	✓			✓		✓	
	Increase citizens' engagement in LGUs functions		✓	✓			✓	
	Contribute to strengthening the capacities of LGUs in the so-called Area C		✓	✓	✓			
	Support preparedness for SDGs localization in LGUs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Support recovery and reconstruction efforts of LGUs in the Gaza Strip	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

APLA strategic goals	APLA strategic objectives	Goals of the Local Government Sector Strategy			Priorities of the National Development Agenda 2024-2029			
		Develop financial resources and stimulate economic development at LGUs	Promote urban growth and improve the quality and inclusive coverage of infrastructure	Empower and strengthen capacities of LGUS and MoLG within the framework of good local governance	Promote resistance-based resilience	Strengthen the production base of the Palestinian economy towards disengagement from the occupation	Reform and improve the quality of public institutions and services	Promote the Palestinian narrative
Represent and defend LGUs interests and issues at all national, regional and international levels	Take part in developing the policy and legal framework in the local government sector	✓	✓	✓			✓	
	Participate in representing Palestine and voicing national priorities at international forums			✓				✓
	Develop partnerships among LGUs, both locally and internationally	✓		✓			✓	✓
	Develop and apply mechanisms to influence and advocate for LGUs issues	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	

Action plan matrix, 2023-2027

Programme	Main activities	Estimated cost (US\$ '000)
Promoting APLA Regulatory Environment	Finalize development of (administrative, technical and financial) standard operating procedures	15
	Finalize the Good Governance Guidance Manual	10
	Develop the organizational structure and upgrade job descriptions, including job loading analysis	20
	Develop a monitoring and evaluation system	10
	Develop a filing system and standard database	10
	Create an internal auditing system	10
	Review, upgrade and approve the APLA Bylaws	10
	Receive ISO 2015	20
Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)		105
APLA Operating Capacity Building	Develop, implement and evaluate the APLA Capacity Building Plan	10
	Evaluate and upgrade the Strategic Plan 2023-2027 on annual basis	25
	Develop annual plans of implementation, including performance indicators	25
	Implement the APLA Communication Strategy	230
	Upgrade and develop the APLA and APLA-managed websites	180
Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)		470
APLA Financial Sustainability	Implement the APLA Financial Sustainability	190
Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)		190
Grand total of Goal 1 in 2023-2027 (US\$ '000)		765

Programme	Main activities	Estimated cost (US\$ '000)
LGU Capacity Building	Design and implement a LGUs staff capacity building programme	100
	Finalize institutionalization and integration of experience sharing programmes within the APLA Technical Support Unit	350
	Design and implement a comprehensive capacity building programme, targeting elected LGUs members	150
Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)		600
Improvement of Service Provision to APLA members	Develop a guidance manual on service provision to LGUs	10
	Institutionalize guidance and advisory services at the Technical Support Unit	20
	Develop APLA's e-service provision	50
	Design and put in place a service promotion programme	35
	Provide advisory services to LGUs in various (legal, administrative, technical and financial) areas	190
Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)		305
Promoting LGUs Financial Stability	Support LGUs capacities to improve revenues and rationalize expenditures	130
	Participate actively in restructuring financial relations between LGUs and the central government	45
	Support efforts to develop LGUs financial resources	50
Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)		225
Strengthening Citizens' Confidence in LGUs	Design and implement activities and initiatives to promote citizens' engagement in LGUs functions	250
	Make disclosure policies at LGUs	100
	Develop and apply communication plans at LGUs	100
Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)		450
Strengthening Resilience and Capability of LGUs in the so-called Area C	Mobilize support to support the implementation of LGUs priorities in the so-called Area C	40
	Implement specialized programmes to increase the efficiency and strengthen the capacities of LGUs in the so-called Area C	360
	Provide capacity building to LGUs in joint work	270
	Implement proposed programme activities in the so-called Area C	3000



Programme	Main activities	Estimated cost (US\$ '000)
Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)		3670
SDGs Localization	Raise the awareness of and provide capacity building to LGUs in SDGs	400
	Mobilize LGUs to localize SDGs	100
	Support efforts to apply SDGs at LGUs	300
	Measure and document LGUs contributions to SDGs implementation	1000
	Develop LGUs capacities to deal with climate change issues	280
Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)		2080
Support recovery and reconstruction efforts of LGUs in the Gaza Strip	Launch advocacy campaigns to raise awareness of LGUs situation and suffering of communities in the Gaza Strip	20
	Design and implement training programmes for LGUs staff on priority issues at work based on the current situation	50
	Engage in international networking and facilitate access to support and funding opportunities	200
	Support financing of socioeconomic development initiatives	3000
Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)		3270



Programme	Main activities	Estimated cost (US\$ '000)
Grand total of Goal 2 in 2023-2027 (US\$ '000)		7330
Development of Policies, Laws and Regulations on the Local Government Sector	Make concerted efforts with local partners to amend and develop the legal and policy framework of the local government sector alongside with LGUs priorities	70
	Develop and adopt a methodology for the preparation of policies/policy papers on the local government sector	30
	Organize and implement various events (conferences and workshops) to develop and approval the legal and policy framework of the local government sector	210
	Create an enabling environment to put upgraded policy and legal framework in place	200
	Compile studies and white papers on the local government sector	225
	Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)	735
Examining and Applying Decentralization in the Local Government Sector	Develop studies on decentralization in the local government sector	80
	Create a roadmap and plan of action to strengthen centralization in the local government sector	100
	Organize a series of meetings and workshops to present and discuss LGUs comments on the study of decentralization in the local government sector	20
	Support efforts to implement short-term interventions to apply decentralization in the local government sector	320
	Establish and institutionalize the mayor's forum for consultations about local government issues	60
Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)	580	
Local and International Representation of LGUs and Promotion of the Question of Palestine in all Forums	Develop agendas for local, regional and international conferences (for constant events) and upgrade them on an ongoing basis (for changing events)	25
	Organize participation and engage LGUs in conferences and workshops	225
	Prepare presentations and brochures to be used in conferences	80
	Document and post participation in conferences in approved media outlets	45
Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)	375	



Programme	Main activities	Estimated cost (US\$ '000)
Promoting and Developing Networking at Local and International Levels	Compile a local study on the objectives and benefits of local twinning	10
	Develop draft (multi-purpose) twin agreements – A legal review	45
	Create a database of local and international LGUs that need or opt for twinning	10
	Publish periodic handouts on the importance of twinning and disseminate experiences and success stories	80
	Hold regular conferences and workshops on the importance of twinning and share experiences both locally and internationally	160
	Implement capacity building programmes for APLA and LGUs staff to develop twinning relations as well as to manage and monitor twinning agreements	100
	Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)	405
Lobbying and Advocacy for LGUs Issues and Priorities	Develop relations between APLA and different media channels through a set of activities	100
	Provide capacity building to the APLA executive committee president and members in lobbying and advocacy	30
	Mobilize the APLA Executive Committee to launch support, advocacy and awareness raising campaigns on local government issues and defend LGU issues in various forums	30
	Develop and implement media tools in support of lobbying and advocacy activities	50
	Mobilize support for LGUs during periodic meetings	90
	Consult with experts in lobbying and advocacy to develop and implement lobbying and advocacy plans	90
	Use dialogue and place pressure on decision makers to ensure that LGU interests are fulfilled	90
	Programme subtotal (US\$ '000)	480
Grand total of Goal 3 in 2023-2027 (US\$ '000)		2575
Grand total of 2023-2027 (US\$ '000)		10,670



Strategic Objective Colours:



The use of blue reflects a commitment to creating strong structures, promoting transparent processes, and maintaining organizational order. It symbolizes reliability and focus on sound governance principles to ensure the long-term stability of the Association.

Choosing green indicates a commitment to enhancing knowledge, skills and resources. It reflects the focus on continuous improvement, learning and innovation. This colour represents the proactive approach to developing the capabilities of individuals and the organization as a whole.

The use of red conveys a sense of urgency and determination in promoting causes and influencing change. It reflects a bold approach to advocating for the LGUs interests and represents the passion behind lobbying efforts.

