



Ministry of Local Government

***The Strategic Framework for
The Ministry of Local Government
2010-2014***

March 2010

Ramallah – Palestine

Ministry of Local Government

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2010-2014

The Ministry's Vision

**“Good local governance able to achieve sustainable
development with effective community participation”**

**“This Plan was prepared by the staff of the Ministry of Local
Government”**

March 2010

Excerpts from the speech of H.E the Minister

Since its inauguration fifteen years ago, the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) assumed a leading role in the local government sector. Based on lessons learned, it became vital for us to adopt crucial decisions to develop the MoLG's role and leverage its performance and operational mechanisms. To achieve this, it is important to adopt a sound planning approach to enable the MoLG to fulfill its mandated responsibilities in planning, guiding, and supervising the local government sector, which governs all aspects of the life of Palestinian citizens regardless to age, gender, color, and religion.

The MoLG's internal decision to adopt the strategic planning approach was taken in line with the Program of the Thirteenth Government "Palestine: Ending the Occupation, Establishing the State", and with its objective to lead a national team responsible for preparation of the cross sectoral plan for the local government and management sector 2011-2013.

This is the first strategic plan that the MoLG developed employing methodical approaches to planning and was led by the MoLG's staff. Their involvement will ensure the effective implementation of the strategic plan and achieve the vision and the mission of the MoLG.

As we firmly believe that planning is a dynamic ongoing process, this plan is only the first step towards the development of the MoLG and the local government sector. Successful implementation of the plan will require continuous monitoring and evaluation, to ensure that the plan is adapted to the changes and emerging needs of our society. Let our slogan be "together we plan, together we implement, and together we strive to achieve good local government".

Finally, I would like to thank all those who have contributed to the development of this plan, and to those who will implement it, monitor and evaluate the progress we achieve. I would like to express our gratitude to CHF International and the United States Agency for International Development for their support to this achievement.

To God we invoke to help us all building our homeland

Dr. Khalid Al Qawasmi
Minister of Local Government

**Speech of H.E Deputy Minister,
Chairman of the
Steering Committee for the Formulation
of the MoLG's Strategy Plan**

The Ministry of Local Government is one of the Palestinian National Authority's (PNA) pioneering institutions that has instituted strategic planning to guide our work instead of resorting to ad-hoc approaches. The MoLG adopted strategic planning to build effective institutions guided by well articulated plans that steer its work, and serve as basis for evaluating progress and implementing corrective measures to improve performance, taking into consideration the future direction of the Ministry.

Moving away from ad-hoc to strategic planning, the MoLG decided to develop a comprehensive five-year strategic plan. This was facilitated by a decision taken by His Excellency on 17 September, 2009 to formulate the Steering Committee for the Development of the Ministry's Strategic Plan. This Steering Committee was chaired by the Deputy Minister, who in turn facilitated the formation of the Technical Team for developing the MoLG's five-year strategic plan, and the drafting committee on the implementation of this plan. The achievements of these Committees rely on the following four basic pillars:

First Pillar:

The responsibilities of the MoLG, as stated in the Thirteenth Government's Program were summarized as follows:

1. Build the institutional capacities of the Local Government Units;
2. Enhance the MoLG's efficiency and its capacities to plan, guide and supervise the local government sector;
3. Achieve more democracy, transparency and community participation in the local government sector;
4. Promote Public Private Partnerships (PPP's) at the Local Government Unit level, in order to support local development and enable the LGU's to achieve fiscal autonomy.

Second Pillar:

Full involvement of the MoLG staff in the development of the strategic plan, and acknowledging the role of one of our main partners; (CHF International) in providing capacity building and specialized training sessions to our staff, prior to development of this plan.

Third Pillar:

This plan represents the strategic and development guidelines for:

1. The local government sector;
2. The Ministry of Local Government, which supervises the local government sector.

Fourth Pillar:

Integration of the gender dimension in the development and implementation processes of this plan.

Today, we can confidently argue that this plan represents the road map for the MoLG for the next five years. The plan will guide the capacity building efforts of the MoLG departments, units, districts offices, and directorates towards effective implementation of their mandate and providing better services for the Palestinian citizens. In addition, the MoLG will rely on the guiding principles of the plan in its continuous quest to assume a leading role in the local government sector and achieving democratic local governance systems in Palestine.

The MoLG extends its gratitude and appreciation to all the committee members and staff who have exerted great efforts in developing the strategic plan.

Last but not the least, the MoLG extends its appreciation and gratitude to **CHF International** and for the United States Agency for International Development (**USAID**) for their extraordinary efforts and support that has been generously provided, and has assisted in harnessing the capacities of the MoLG staff to overcome all challenges faced during this process.

Eng. Mazen Ghuneim

Deputy Minister, Ministry of Local Government

Chairman of the Steering Committee for the Preparation of the Strategic Plan

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Abbreviations:

- Ministry of Local Government = MoLG
- Local Government Units = LGU's
- Public Private Partnership = PPP
- Palestinian National Authority = PNA

Notes:

- LGU's refer to the Local Government Units and Joint Services Council
- Regional refers to Palestinian Administrative Districts

Introduction:

Since the establishment of the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) in 1994, and due to nascent formation of the PNA institutions at that time, the MoLG, like other line ministries, failed to adopt the strategic planning approach as the guiding methodology for its work. This failure led to severe shortcomings in its performance, and structural imbalances in the delineation of the duties and responsibilities between different departments of the Ministry and overlapping authorities and roles. As a result, the need to address the inefficiencies of the MoLG in meeting its huge responsibilities to guide and supervise more than (483) Local Government Units (LGU's), and approximately (86) Joint Services Councils in accordance with the Local Government Units Law No. (1) of 1997.

During the last four years, the MoLG's senior administration realized the significance of strategic planning. This new vision was supported by the government's direction towards developing practical strategic plans in the various PNA Ministries and institutions based on contemporary management approaches, and responding to the requirements of the donor community, with the full involvement of Ministry staff.

In line with the national policy agenda, the MoLG has –formulated a five-year strategic plan for the years of 2010-2014. This process was facilitated by a decision made by His Excellency, the Minister of Local Government, on September 17, 2010 to form the Steering Committee and the Technical Committee responsible for preparing the strategic plan for the MoLG.

These committees started working according to the participatory principles of planning approach, with the support of CHF International. CHF International provided a training course in strategic planning for more than 80 employees, representing different staff levels of the MoLG. In addition, the Technical Committee, in cooperation and participation of all departments, units and directorates of the MoLG, conducted four workshops where participants identified the Ministry's vision and mission in accordance with the government's objectives stated in the Thirteen Government Program for 2009.

The Thirteenth Government's Program of ending the occupation and establishing the state, has assigned four main tasks for the MoLG:

1. Build the institutional capacities of the Local Government Units;
2. Enhance the MoLG's efficiency and its capacities to plan, guide and supervise the local governance sector;
3. Achieve more democracy, transparency and community participation in the local governance sector;
4. Promote Public Private Partnerships (PPP's) at the LGU level; in order to support local development and enable the LGU's to achieve fiscal autonomy.

In the light of the above mentioned tasks, the strategic guidelines of the MoLG have been identified as follows:

The strategic objectives of local government sector:

1. Promote the decentralization of the LGU's
2. Institutionalization of community participation
3. Stimulate and promote partnerships between the LGU's and the private and public sectors (PPP's), and with civil society organizations, in order to achieve sustainable local development

The MoLG's institutional strategic objectives:

1. Enhance the formulation and development of policies and planning in the MoLG
2. Adopt human resource development policies
3. Create a healthy working environment that fosters the achievement of the MoLG's goals and successful implementation of its activities
4. Build the capacity of the MoLG in the fields of physical planning at the national and local levels

Over the period of four months, and with robust follow up of the Steering Committee, the Technical Committee was able to produce the MoLG's strategic plan in full cooperation and coordination with the different departments, units, directorates, and staff of the Ministry.

The plan was approved by the Steering Committee, and then was ratified by H.E the Minister of Local Government. Subsequent to the approval of the plan, the different departments, units and directorates of the MoLG started to prepare action plans to launch the implementation of the strategic plan in February, 2010.

Consistent with the PNA's guidelines, the MoLG also started developing the Inter-Sector Strategy for Local Government and Administration, and adopted a participatory approach in the planning process, where a national team composed of representatives from all relevant line ministries, LGU's, Palestinian universities and civil society organizations was formed. The MoLG, in cooperation with support from CHF International, conducted twelve workshops for the technical and national teams and all the partners. A draft plan for the Inter-Sector Strategy for the Local Government and Administration was produced. The plan was submitted to the Ministry of Planning within the designated timeframe, and was consistent with the guidelines of the Thirteenth Government Plan.

It is worth noting that both the MoLG's Strategic Plan and the Inter- Sector Strategy for Local Government and Administration have taken into consideration gender issues, acknowledging the significance of women's role in the planning process and in achieving sustainable development.

The development of the MoLG's Strategic Plan and the Inter-Sector Strategy reflects a significant turning point in the Ministry's vision and its working approach. The MoLG adopted contemporary and systematic management approaches necessary to achieve its objectives and in consistency with the government policies and guidelines. This shift in management approaches aims to contribute to building the PNA's institutions, as a essential step towards establishing an independent Palestinian state, achieving sustainable

development, and improving the quality of life so that all Palestinian citizens can live in dignity and freedom.

It is a new era in the history of the MoLG in particular, and for the PNA in general, towards building Palestinian institutions based on contemporary and systematic management approaches, which will eventually lead to the development of all aspects of the Palestinian local government sector.

Methodology:

The MoLG's senior administration and staff realized the importance of strategic planning as an essential tool for developing the Ministry's role and enhancing its performance. The shift towards strategic planning has been bolstered by the government's direction which responded to the requirements of contemporary management approaches and to the needs of the donor community. Consequently, these new government directions resulted in the development and implementation of strategic plans in the different PNA's Ministries and institutions. Consistent with the government's new directions and to achieve its objectives, the MoLG developed its medium term strategic plan (3-5 years). For this purpose, H.E the Minister of Local Government issued a decision on September 17, 2009 to immediately form a Steering Committee and a Technical Committee tasked with developing this strategic plan.

The methodology for developing this strategic plan was based on the following principles:

1. Utilizing and relying on the internal capacities of the Ministry staff.
2. Active participation and cooperation of the different departments and staff, regardless of their job titles and levels of responsibilities.

To ensure full participation of the MoLG staff in the process, it was decided to build the capacities of the MoLG staff in strategic planning. Consequently, the Technical Committee, with the support of CHF International, conducted four trainings in strategic planning for eighty MoLG employees representing general departments, units and directorates of the Ministry. Out of the 80 trained MoLG staff, 20 were selected based on capabilities and interest in participating in a Training of Trainers workshop on strategic planning.

Over a period of four continuous months, and with robust follow up from the Technical and Steering Committees, the plan was finally completed through perseverance, dedication and contribution of the different directors, departments, units and divisions of the MoLG.

The process of developing the MoLG's Strategic Plan included the following steps:

1. Consensus building around the Ministry's vision and mission: this was done through the formation of four working groups tasked with developing the vision and mission of the Ministry. The working groups presented their conclusion which was approved by the Steering Committee and ratified by the Minister.
 - **Vision: Good local governance able to achieve sustainable development with effective community participation**
 - **Mission: A leading Ministry that supports Local Government Units' capacity and resources development towards achieving citizens' welfare within a good local governance framework and practices**
2. Conducting SWOT analysis, where four working groups were formed to conduct an analysis of the internal and external environment influencing the MoLG. The participants collectively agreed on the various strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which impact the Ministry. See Appendix No.1 for the results of the SWOT analysis.
3. Consensus building around the institutional values of the MoLG, which are derived from the principles of good governance.
4. Identification of the MoLG's strategic goals in line with the responsibilities and objectives assigned to the Ministry by the government.
5. Identification of the MoLG's strategic guidelines, and obtaining approval and ratification of these guidelines.
6. Identification and adoption of the MoLG's strategic objectives by the Steering Committee.
7. The MoLG's departments, directorates and units have prepared action plans to implement the strategic plan starting March 2010.

The composition of the Steering Committee for Plan Development:

***Chairman of the Committee:* H.E Engineer Mazen Ghuneim, Deputy Minister.**

***Coordinator of the Committee:* Mr. Abdel Karim Sider, Deputy Assistant**

Members:

Dr. Tawfiq Al Budeiri, Mr. Shukri Radaydeh, Mr. Walid Halayqah, Mrs. Hanan Imseih, Mr. Muhyiddeen Al-Ardha, Mr. Raed Al-Barghouthi, Mr. Basem Hadaydeh, Mr. Hani Kayed.

The composition of the Technical Committee for the Strategic Plan Development:

Chair of the Committee: Mr. Abdel Karim Sider.

Coordinator of the Committee: Mr. Shukri Radaydeh.

Members:

Dr. Hani Al Hroub; Dr. Husein Abdel Qader; Mrs. Reema Shbeitah; Mrs. Suha Al Sheikh; Mr. Ghassan Daraghme; Mrs. Ohoud Inayeh; Mr. Shadi Baddareen; Mr. Hatem Musallam; Mr. Jihad Mashaqi; Mr. Ibrhaim Al Hmouz; Mr. Mu'ayad Shehadeh; Mr. Raed Al Sharabati.

Composition of the Drafting Committee:

Mr. Abdel Karim Sider; Mr. Mohammed Al-Qarout; Mr. Islam Abu Ziad; Dr. Tawfiq Al Budeiri.

Participants in the Plan Development:

H.E the Deputy Minister, the Steering Committee and the Technical Committee members, and;

Mr. Hani Al Nujoum; Mr. Abdel Karim Said; Mr. Walid Halayqa; Mr. Munjed Bleibliyeh; Mrs. Reema Shbeitah; Mr. Adnan Jaffal; Mr. Islam Abu Ziad; Mr. Mohammed Al Qarout; Mr. As'ad Sawalmeh; Mr. Khalid Ishtayeh; Mr. Izzat Badwan; Mr. Mohammed Muheisen; Mr. Mohammed Jadallah; Mrs. Lana Al Rimawi; Mrs. Salwa Shbaitah; Mr. Samer Nu'eirat; Mrs. Sireen Nakhleh; Mrs. Jamileh Al-Attrash; Dr. Mohammed Al-Alami; Mr. Nidal Hasan; Mrs. Majeda Awashreh; Mr. Mohamoud Karaja; Mrs. Hiba Al Tijani.

The Vision of the MoLG

Good local governance able to achieve sustainable development with effective community participation

The Mission of the MoLG

A leading Ministry that supports local government units' capacity and resources development towards achieving citizens' welfare within a good local governance framework and practices

The Values of the MoLG

Integrity, dedication, transparency, accountability, team spirit, innovation, confidence, keenness for achieving best results, and faith in its staff.

Goals

Empowering the LGU's ability to build effective institutional capacities.

Promoting the MoLG's capacities in planning, as well as guidance and monitoring to better lead the local government sector.

Promoting democracy, transparency and community participation in the local government sector.

Promoting the concept of partnership between LGU's and the private and public sectors, in order to generate local development and to enhance the fiscal autonomy for the LGU's.

The Sectoral Strategic Objectives

1 Increase the level of decentralization between MoLG and LGU's

2 Enhance the institutionalization of community participation

3 Strengthen partnership between the LGU's and the private and public sectors, as well as the civil society organizations in order to achieve sustainable development

The Institutional Developmental Strategic Objectives:

- 1 Promote the formulation of policies and planning in the MoLG
- 2 Adopt policies for human resource development in the MoLG
- 3 Create suitable working environment at the MoLG
- 4 Strengthen the capacities of the MoLG in the fields of local and regional planning
- 5 Strengthen the internal capacities of the MoLG in management as well as monitoring and evaluation of services and projects

The Strategic Objectives:

Strategic Objective 1: Increase the level of decentralization between MoLG and LGU's

- 1 Develop clear policies on how to increase the level of decentralization between the MoLG and LGU's
- 2 Develop rules and regulations and adoption of procedural applications towards promoting level of decentralization.
- 3 Promote the role of local governments units in physical and developmental planning

Strategic Objective 2: Promote the skills of the MoLG staff in policy formulation and planning

- 1 Institutionalize the process of policies and strategies setting
- 2 Build the capacities and skills of the staff in policy setting and planning for local government sector
- 3 Develop the MoLG organizational structure (*detailed job descriptions for the different staff and departments, in addition to the development of operational and monitoring & evaluation manuals*)
- 4 Develop the MoLG human resource and increase its staff capacities

Strategic Objective 3: Improve the current working environment to increase MoLG staff productivity

- 1 Enhance appropriate working environment to enable employees perform their duties and tasks effectively
- 2 Create a gender sensitive work environment
- 3 Develop an automated working systems

Strategic Objective 4: Strengthen the MoLG's capacity in the fields of local and regional planning

- 1 Institutionalize the regional and local planning
- 2 Build the capacities and skills of the local government sector staff in local and regional planning
- 3 Develop land usage schemes at the regional level
- 4 Institutionalize the process of managing infrastructure and development projects (including monitoring & evaluation)

Strategic Objective 5: Strengthen the capacities of the MoLG in the fields of guidance & monitoring

- 1 Build the capacities of the MoLG staff in guiding, supervising, monitoring and evaluating processes

Strategic Objective 6: Develop an enabling legal environment that encourage Public Private Partnership (PPP's)

- 1 Develop an enabling legal environment for PPP's
- 2 Institutionalize the partnership process within the MoLG and LGU's
- 3 Achieve successful partnership models within the framework of PPP's

Strategic Objective 7: Institutionalize community participation in LGU's

1 Promote the legal framework and ensure community participation in the planning and evaluation process

2 Encourage and strengthen the capacities of the LGU's in developing mechanisms for community participation

Developmental Initiatives:

1. Development of clear policies that promotes decentralization at LGU's

- Adoption of the draft paper on financial policies
- Development of a policy paper on human development in LGU's
- Development of a policy paper on level of decentralization in the LGU's, containing clear, applicable and measurable standards
- Development of a policy paper on the MoLG's role in guidance and monitoring the performance of the LGU's
- Development of policies pertaining to the provision of services and infrastructure

2. Development of rules and regulations and adoption of their procedural applications, in order to enhance the degree of decentralization in the LGU's:

- Development of the LGU's Law.
- Development of the Construction and Zoning Law
- Development of the Planning Law
- Development of the LGU's regulations
- Adoption of amalgamation strategy that insures LGU's capability of providing better services and resources

3. Enhancing the role of the LGU's in physical and developmental planning:

- Adoption of the physical planning guidebook
- Expand the local development strategic planning methodology to include the development of local and regional investment plans
- Adoption of the Joint Councils' Strategy

4. *Institutionalization of policies and strategies:*

- Institutionalization of the policies and strategies' unit at the MoLG

5. *Promoting staff efficiency in setting policies, project management, and planning in the local government sector:*

- Development of professional training program for MoLG employees to enable them develop policies and plans for the local government sector
- Establishment of a comprehensive database that meets the policies and planning development requirements in the local government sector

6. *Development of the MoLG organizational structure (including the job descriptions, job classifications, operational guidelines and manuals to effectively achieve the MoLG's objectives):*

- Revise and update the proposed organizational structure for better performance

7. *Development of the MoLG's human resources:*

- Formulation of a specialized and professional human resource committee
- Development of comprehensive performance indicators
- Conduct a need assessment for MoLG human resources development
- Develop a comprehensive training program for future youth leaders in the local government sector
- Qualify the MoLG's staff in increasing their level of awareness in local government sector rules and regulations
- Develop and empower the human resources department's role in assuming its responsibilities

8. *Develop appropriate working condition to enable employees to carry out their duties effectively and professionally:*

- Set up action plans to develop and modernize the MoLG's infrastructure (adequate spaces, furniture, office supplies, computer appliances etc.)
- Develop comprehensive operational manuals for all MoLG's functions

9. *Create a gender sensitive work environment:*

- Develop an action plan that meets gender requirements

10. *Develop an automated operations system in the MoLG:*

- Establish a computerized administrative system to follow up and monitor the implementation of the strategic plan
- Create a computerized system to administer the data in the MoLG and connect it with district offices

11. *Institutionalize the local and regional planning process in the MoLG:*

- Develop policies and tools of the local and regional planning

12. *Build the capacities of the local government sector's employees in the fields of local and regional planning:*

- Develop a training curriculum that is line with sectoral guidelines and policies

13. *Develop the land usage scheme at the regional level:*

- Completion of land settlements in coordination with the relevant authorities
- Develop the local land master plans

14. *Institutionalize the process of the administration, monitoring and evaluating of the development and infrastructure projects:*

- Develop the operational manuals and guidelines
- Develop methodological system that sets up mechanisms for projects allocation

15. *Build the capacities of teams in the areas of projects management and evaluation:*

- Develop training in projects management and evaluation

16. Strengthen the MoLG's capacity in guidance and monitoring:

- Develop the standards, specifications, and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation
- Develop the criteria, standards and mechanisms for selecting appropriate staff for the areas of guidance, monitoring and evaluation
- Coordinate the relationship of the MoLg with external monitoring partners such as donors etc.
- Enhance the relationship with the different LGU's

17. Develop the legal and regulatory framework to ensure and enhance community participation in the planning and evaluation process:

- Identify needs and requirements for developing the legal and regulatory framework related to community participation
- Develop laws and regulations concerning partnership
- Review the rules and procedures adopted by the MoLG regarding the institutionalization of the community participation in planning and evaluation process

18. Increase the capacity of the LGU's to develop mechanisms that enhance community participation:

- Develop principles, standards, guidelines and tools for the community participation, in order to maximize the capacity of the LGU's
- Create specific measurable indicators to assess the performance of the LGU's, and adopt these indicators by the guidance and monitoring department as applicable evaluation criteria

19. Develop a legal framework for partnership between LGU's and public and private sectors:

- Formation of a national committee
- Suggest required amendments to the legal and regulatory framework concerning PPP's

- Develop an incentives system through tax exemptions and other means to stimulate PPP's at the LGU's

20. Institutionalize the partnership process (between the LGU's and the public and private sectors) in the MoLG and at the LGU's:

- Establish the Local Development and Investment Unit at the MoLG
- Develop the standards, guidelines, manuals and necessary tools to facilitate partnerships between the LGU's and private sector institutions

21. Achieve successful partnership models between LGU's and the public and private sectors:

- Coordinate with related government institutions and with the Donors so that they can support PPP's initiatives for local development.

Results/ conclusions of the SWOT analysis

Strengths

1. Senior Administration will towards development in all fields
2. Availability of qualified and efficient staff
3. Team spirit
4. Sufficient equipment
5. Awareness of the applicable procedure
6. Availability of a set of computerized systems and databases
7. Good relationships with public institutions
8. Availability of a training center at the MoLG
9. Availability of rules and regulations governing the Local Government
10. Availability of a planning and zoning law

Weaknesses

1. Absence of motivation
2. Lack of information exchange
3. Shortcomings in master plans
4. Inappropriate location of the MoLG
5. Ambiguous role of the public relations unit
6. Meager logistic support
7. Presence of a number of unqualified employees
8. Lack of staff
9. Absence of clear job descriptions and job classification
10. Not a gender sensitive working environment
11. Lack of dedication and devotion of some employees towards work
12. Absence of effective job rotation policy
13. Shortage in written and publicized work procedures
14. Absence of collective work spirit
15. Absence of clear policy for local development

Opportunities

1. Availability of a National Governmental Plan
2. Availability of international support
3. Availability of some partnerships with the private sector and local community
4. Availability of legal framework
5. MoLG's commitment to system automation
6. Relative improvements in security conditions
7. Community participation
8. Governmental policies and regulations
9. Availability of supportive governmental policies
10. MoLG's tendency towards achieving the Strategic Plan

Threats

1. Israeli occupation and internal political division
2. Cessation of international support
3. Lack of legal awareness in the local government sector
4. Weak mechanisms for the implementation of rules and regulations
5. Rules and regulations framework of comprehensive or incomplete and inadequate rules and regulations
6. Resistance towards change due to cultural and social heritage
7. Existence of a large number of Local Government Units
8. Weak capabilities and limited natural resources
9. Absence of mechanisms for community participation

This five-year strategic plan for the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government is made possible by the support of the American People through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents of this plan are the sole responsibility of the Ministry of Local Government and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.