



© Enabel

# Enabel in Palestine

## Belgium - Palestine Cooperation Programme 2022-2026

Belgium and Palestine have had well-established cooperation since 1997. Based on the political and socio-economic context of the country, the 2022-2026 cooperation programme aims to empower young Palestinians to become active and critical citizens by supporting access to improved education, training, guidance and access to employment. At the same time, we promote green and circular economy initiatives and boost the development of sustainable cities. The 2022-2026 Belgium-Palestine cooperation programme totals 70 million euro.

# Priorités

The Belgium-Palestine cooperation programme focuses on youth empowerment and the development of green jobs.

1

## Education & Learning

As a result of the longstanding Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the quality and availability of school infrastructure remain a significant challenge, particularly in the Gaza Strip, Area C (West Bank) and East Jerusalem. Enabel works to improve access to quality education by building, retrofitting and extending schools, supporting teacher training and STE(A)M (Sciences, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) initiatives. The construction of 4 schools incorporates environmentally friendly and green energy elements, which is quite unique in Palestine and goes in line with Enabel's strategic commitments.

The programme builds technical capacity at both the Ministry and school levels through STEM training: this includes supporting the Ministry's STEM strategy development and providing training for school principals and teachers. Additionally, our support includes supporting children with disabilities with hearing aids, mobility devices, tablets and laptops, enlarged books, and braille printers. Furthermore, we are also supporting the renovation, refurbishing and equipping of STEM labs in about 30 schools.

2

## Civic engagement and protection

Young people (15-29 years) account for approximately 30% of the Palestinian population. The protracted conflict, deteriorating living conditions and resulting lack of future prospects have increased the growing sense of despair and hopelessness amongst youth. Civic engagement has become increasingly challenging, and young Palestinians who claim their rights run a high risk of becoming victim of human rights violations. To face this challenge, the programme provides training and awareness-raising campaigns for young people to exercise their human rights while enhancing their capacity to protect themselves. They are also supported in carrying out advocacy campaigns towards duty-bearers with a focus on youth human rights awareness, accountability, and civic engagement.

Meanwhile, mental health and psychosocial issues are one of the most significant public health challenges in Palestine. Enabel provides training on youth mental health to enable better access to specialised services and care. A focus is put on improving access to sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as increasing gender-based violence prevention. The programme supported a partnership between University of Antwerp and Birzeit University to conduct research, seminars, and workshops, and aiming at engaging students in their communities and student-led group discussions on human rights issues.

## Cross-cutting issues



### Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)

By adopting HRBA, the programme aims at giving voice to the rights-holders (target population, including communities and organisations around them) to claim their human rights and to strengthen the capacity of duty-bearers to respect, protect and fulfil those rights across all programmes. One example is supporting youth to advocate for their rights and engage in the decision making with duty-bearers.



### Inclusion and gender

Our programme targets all vulnerable communities indiscriminately, with special attention to combating existing inequalities resulting from unfair socio-cultural norms and practices. This includes providing supportive devices to children with disabilities to better access education, and supporting women to get jobs or start their businesses, as well as supporting women and other groups to proactively participate in the decision-making on economic, political and community levels.

## 3 Skills, employment, and entrepreneurship

The unemployment rates in Palestine are rising, especially among young, vulnerable groups. Nevertheless, business owners still face problems filling their vacancies with skilled labour, due to a lack of relevant skills development initiatives. At the same time, self-employment and entrepreneurship strategies do not sufficiently equip youth to start their own businesses.

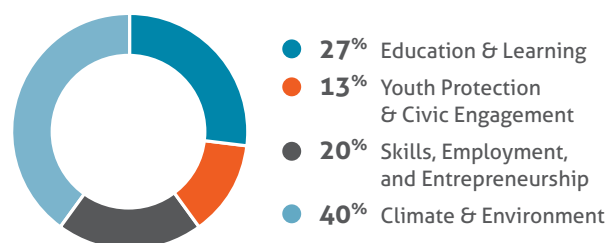
Enabel aims at increasing the number of young women and men employed in decent work conditions or through their own business. The programme strives to increase employment opportunities by addressing the skills mismatch between what's needed and what's available: to do so, it improves the quality and relevance of technical and vocational education and training, while supporting the development of sustainable businesses and start-ups through tailored assistance, incubation services and seed grants - with special interest in green and tech-driven businesses. Focus is placed on skills in high demand by the private sector such as digital and entrepreneurial skills, but also non-technical 21st century skills. The programme also facilitates access for fresh university graduates to quality career guidance, counselling, job-matching and first employment services.

## 4 Green West Bank and Gaza

The cooperation programme supports the emergence of a green and circular economy in the West Bank and Gaza, with the view to contribute to a sustainable and inclusive Palestinian society, and reduce environmental hazards and dependency on non-renewable natural resources. It strengthens the value chains, entrepreneurs and local authorities in various sectors, such as energy, water, agriculture, waste, recycling, construction, transport or industry. A specific focus is placed on waste management, renewable energy and energy efficiency.

In the West Bank, the programme supports the creation of green jobs, especially for women, through development of Green and Circular Economy in a set of specific value chains, construction/rehabilitation of green public buildings and infrastructure, promotion of green services, and development of green public spaces in urban areas.

### Breakdown of financial commitments 2022-2026



### Decent work

Enabel supports skills development as a key strategy to address youth unemployment. Through skills training, young people learn skills or trades that can support them to find decent work or start their own business. The cooperation programme comprises a mix of incentives to promote adherence by businesses to decent work principles, commitments to formal contracts, minimum wages, occupational health and safety measures.



### Innovation and new technologies

Throughout the cooperation activities, innovation and new technologies are promoted to close the digital divide. This involves the promotion of digital skills and raising awareness about digital rights to empower youth and women, the promotion and use of e-teaching and learning, connectivity and availability of technology in schools. The programme also promotes stimulation of business initiatives in the digital economy and digital solutions for data collection and analysis.

# Other actions of Enabel in Palestine

## Schools IV/RiSE

- Duration: 2019-2024
- Budget: € 23.6 million
  - Belgium: € 18.5 million
  - European Union: € 5.1 million

Resilience in Schools of East Jerusalem (RiSE) aims to strengthen the resilience of the Palestinian community in East Jerusalem by improving access to education, schools and public spaces.

The fourth phase of the school construction programme (Schools IV) aims at improving the access to quality education through the development of a healthy, safe, child and environmentally friendly infrastructure in East Jerusalem and Area C. It focuses on the construction and rehabilitation of child-friendly schools design while experimenting innovative and eco-sustainable solutions. The project is jointly financed by Belgium and the European union.

## Youth Empowerment Project (YEP)

- Duration: 2022-2024
- Budget: European Union: € 5 million

The project aims to enhance Palestinian young people's employability and economic empowerment through supporting young women and men to be better equipped to access inclusive and decent employment opportunities and enhancing resilience of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

## SAWA I & II

- Duration: 2020-2026
- Budget: European Union
  - SAWA I: € 1.5 million
  - SAWA II: € 6 million

SAWA – which means “together” in Arabic – was the first project in Gaza to focus on entrepreneurship and targeted youth and women with training, technical support, and seed funds to start their own income-generating businesses or scale up existing ones, with special focus on green businesses.

After SAWA I success, a second round of the project (SAWA II) was launched in Gaza in 2023 targeting hundreds of youths and businesses, before being suspended in light of the tragic developments in the humanitarian and security situation in Gaza. Consequently, the project will be partially shifted to be implemented in the West Bank with additional funding from the EU to support youth and women create green businesses and small enterprises, until the situation in Gaza allows for implementation of such developmental projects. The SAWA project is financed by the European union.

## About Enabel

Enabel is the Belgian development agency. It implements Belgium's governmental cooperation. The agency also works for other national and international donors. With its partners in Belgium and abroad, Enabel offers solutions to address pressing global challenges - Climate Change, Economic and Social Inequality, Urbanisation, Peace and Security, Human Mobility - and to promote Global Citizenship. With 2,000 staff, Enabel manages about 200 projects in twenty countries, in Europe, Africa and the Middle East. Since the start of the bilateral cooperation programme with Palestine in 1997, Enabel has implemented projects amounting to a total sum of 144 million euros in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and Gaza.



**Belgian development agency  
in Palestine**

Consulate General of Belgium  
5 Baibars Street, Sheikh Jarrah  
91190 Jerusalem  
T +972 2 581 5915  
representation.palestine@enabel.be  
enabel.be



**Belgium**

partner in development