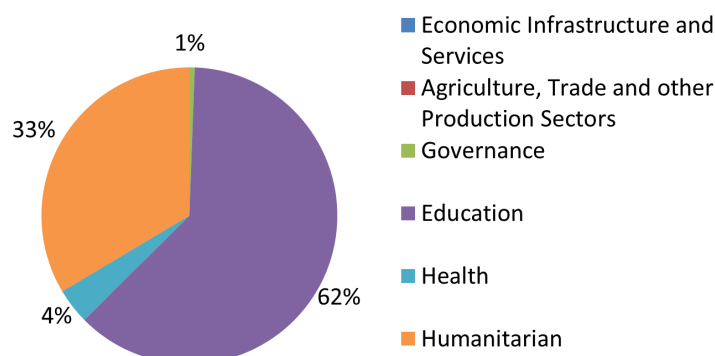


2021-22 PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM PROGRESS REPORT

The COVID-19 Development Response Plan for the Palestinian Territories has been extended through 2022-23. In response to the pandemic and ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestinians, Australia's support has focused on improving core health and social protection services and fostering economic recovery. In 2022-23, the program will have a stronger focus on the provision of humanitarian assistance and gender and disability inclusive services.

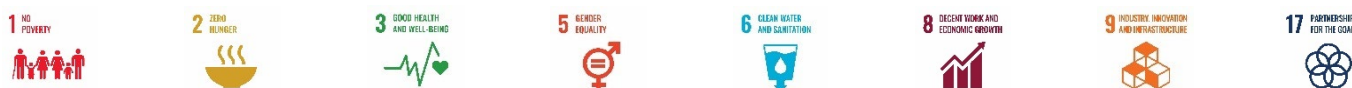
Program Budget	2021-22 Budget Estimate \$m*
Bilateral	17.1
Regional	1.1
Global	11.7
Other Govt. Departments	0.0
Total ODA	29.8

**Palestinian Territories Development Program,
by Sector Group 2021-22 Budget Estimate***



*Actual expenditure is expected to be available in early 2023. Due to rounding, totals may not match the sum of components.

Our development program to the Palestinian Territories contributes towards achieving the following Sustainable Development Goals:



The 2021-22 Palestinian Territories Development Program Progress Report summarises progress with implementation of the Australia – Palestinian Territories COVID-19 Development Response Plan and highlights program results.


CONTEXT

Australian development assistance to the Palestinian Territories responds to Palestinians' development and humanitarian needs and reflects **Australia's long-standing support for a two-state solution, where Israel and a future Palestinian state co-exist in peace and security**. Australia also supports Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria through our partnership with the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).

Over 2021-22, humanitarian and development needs across the Palestinian Territories did not abate. This was driven by the **lingering economic impacts of COVID 19, higher commodity prices and the ongoing and protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict**, which continues to create instability and has exacerbated existing economic and health system challenges. Following the escalation of hostilities in May 2021, clashes have continued to flare-up in the West Bank and Gaza. This **conflict continues to damage medical facilities, roads, housing, water and sanitation infrastructure and limit access to essential humanitarian services**.

With the reduction of COVID-19 related restrictions, the Palestinian economy has seen some improvement. However, this growth is unlikely to be sustained without immediate fiscal reforms. The World Bank estimates that the Palestinian gross domestic product (GDP) increased by 7.1 per cent in 2021; however, they expect this to moderate and full year GDP growth is forecast at 3.5 per cent in 2022.

The unemployment rate remained stable at 26 per cent (47 per cent in Gaza and 16 per cent in the West Bank). Economic factors such as **high inflation, limited economic activity and reduced international funding continue to**



challenge the delivery of essential services and create long-term impacts on livelihoods, employment and food security.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there were 702,708 reported cases and 5,707 cumulative deaths of COVID-19 in the Palestinian Territories throughout the pandemic (as of 30 September 2022). The **COVID-19 caseload and intermittent lockdowns placed additional pressure on stressed health, employment, and education systems and increased the risk of Gender Based Violence (GBV)**. As of 25 September 2022, 3,741,181 people across the Palestinian Territories had been vaccinated.

AUSTRALIA'S RESPONSE AND PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In 2021-22, the Australian Government's development and humanitarian support to the Palestinian Territories comprised: assistance for Palestinian refugees in the Near East (UN Relief and Works Agency, UNRWA); water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), protection and health activities (International Committee of the Red Cross/Crescent, ICRC); WASH and child protection (UN Children's Fund, UNICEF); Australia Awards Scholarships; facilitating the movement of humanitarian staff and goods into Gaza and the West Bank (the UN Office for Project Services, UNOPS); and COVID 19 response measures (World Health Organization, WHO).

Health Security

Under this pillar, Australian support continued to provide health services to vulnerable Palestinians and maintain the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout 2021, UNRWA conducted seven million primary health consultations, operated **22 health centres across Gaza, and delivered mental health and psychosocial support to 25,633 refugees**. As in-person teaching began to resume in the second half of 2021, UNRWA provided **12,255 students (5,613 girls, 6,642 boys), including 671 children with disabilities, with individual counselling**. UNRWA also referred 18,115 patients (12,936 female, 5,179 male) to its network of contracted hospitals. The higher number of women provided with hospitalisation assistance reflected the prioritisation of maternal and child health care.

Although COVID-19 case numbers started to decrease in the first half of 2022, a robust response to COVID-19 was maintained alongside the implementation of vaccination programs. With Australian support, the ICRC distributed Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), supported quarantine centres and medical facilities, upgraded electrical, upgrade waste management facilities, and **enhanced access to essential water and electricity services for around 1,773,000 Palestinians (including 531,975 women and 709,300 children), in both the West Bank and Gaza**.


With direct support from Australia, the WHO conducted 86,420 COVID-19 tests (including for 42,613 females), procured **40 patient beds, 10 monitors and 8 lab supplies to support Ministry of Health hospitals, and trained 112 junior nurses on intensive care management of COVID-19 patients** in Gaza and the West Bank.

Through the UNOPS-managed Access Support Unit and Program Management Unit, Australia supported **humanitarian access and movement into Gaza during the COVID pandemic**. It facilitated the entry of humanitarian staff and supplies into Gaza to deliver COVID response initiatives.

Stability

Australia is working with a range of partners to ensure **food security, social protection mechanisms for refugees, appropriate referral systems for survivors of domestic violence, and access to clean water and sanitation to at-risk populations in Gaza and the West Bank**.

During the reporting period, UNRWA provided **social safety net assistance for 398,000 people, and distributed cash assistance to 160,180 people**. This support mitigated the additional socio-economic hardship caused by COVID-19. To support food security, UNRWA provided 1,136,351 Palestine refugees (567,356 female, 568,995 male) with in-kind emergency food assistance. Recipients included 32,945 women-headed households, and 52,883 persons with disabilities.



UNRWA also assisted **3,999 identified survivors of GBV (3,563 female; 436 male), including 22 persons with disabilities**, through the extension of medical, including psychosocial counselling, legal, food and cash assistance. However, due to limited funding, UNRWA was unable to fully meet its targets to adequately support vulnerable refugees facing protection risks, including GBV, abuse, exploitation, and neglect.

Following the escalation of violence in Gaza in May 2021 and in August 2022, the ICRC maintained regular dialogue with the various authorities and actors on both sides regarding their obligations under International Humanitarian Law.

Economic recovery

The Australia Awards program has continued to contribute to building the institutional capacity in the Palestinian Territories through the **education of future leaders in areas linked to economic recovery and long-term resilience**, including the agriculture, public policy and water sectors. In addition to funding new scholarships, the Australian Government continues to support a number of scholars who remain in Australia completing their studies.

With Australian support, UNRWA's operations in the Palestinian Territories provided **short-term employment opportunities to vulnerable Palestinian refugees, mitigating food insecurity and the protracted economic impact of COVID-19**. During the reporting period this benefited over 40,000 individuals and provided US\$10.5 million into the local economy. The Agency also continued to prioritise women as loan recipients to facilitate economic empowerment, given women's limited employment opportunities and their status as primary caregivers.

In September 2021, the Australia Middle East NGO Cooperation Agreement Phase 3 (AMENCA 3) program concluded. AMENCA3 boosted **economic and livelihood opportunities for farming communities, with focuses on the engagement of women and increasing linkages with the private sector**. However, DFAT identified disproportionately high administrative costs for AMENCA's governance and management model. AMENCA3 also faced several operational issues that impacted upon effectiveness, including restrictions on movement of people and goods into and out of the Palestinian Territories and challenges ensuring oversight of all downstream partners.

ANNEX 1: PROGRESS AGAINST COVID-19 DEVELOPMENT RESPONSE PLAN RESULTS INDICATORS

Health Security

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Eligible Palestinians are treated at UNRWA medical centres	Supported 6.17 million primary health care consultations.
Provision of school-based mental health and psychosocial support to distressed refugees	Supported school counsellors to reach 12,255 students (5,613 girls and 6,642 boys) through individual counselling and a further 88 students (66 girls and, 22 boys) to receive group counselling. Supported 1,694 parent awareness and consultation sessions (convened remotely to avoid physical gatherings).
Provision of technical support and training to medical staff (including PPE and other medical material)	Through UNRWA, Australia contributed to 769 health workers receiving personal protective equipment.
Palestinians are provided water and sanitation during the pandemic	The ICRC provided water and sanitation activities that impacted 1.77 million people (including 531,975 women and 709,300 children).
Movement of goods and people to support adequate supply of equipment and medications and to support economic recovery	Australia supported the movement of personnel and humanitarian and infrastructure supplies into Gaza through our partnership with UNOPS.

Stability

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Palestinian refugee victims of violence are referred to protection service providers	Supported 1,812 GBV survivors (1,725 women and 87 men) with counselling support. Supported psychosocial support for 46,659 Palestine refugees (2,791 women, 1,501 men, 21,472 girls, 20,895 boys, and 2,506 people with disabilities).
Vulnerable women, men, girls and boys provided with emergency assistance in conflict and crisis situations	Through the ICRC, supported more than 20,650 Palestinians with emergency material and financial assistance to cover basic living conditions.

Economic Recovery

Key Results Indicators	Progress/Result
Farmers report sustained or increased income during the pandemic	The Australia Middle East NGO Cooperation Agreement (AMENCA 3) concluded in September 2021. AMENCA 3 supported agriculture and economic development in the Palestinian Territories. AMENCA's COVID-19 response included subsidising and delivering food parcels to vulnerable families in the West Bank and Gaza. Over April to December 2020, the AMENCA COVID pivot supported close to 13,000 farmers and provided food support to 6,250 people at a cost of \$500,000. AMENCA 3 supported private sector partners and farmers to



	stay in business through incentivising them to continue operations during the pandemic.
Examples of improved livelihoods for women and men working in agriculture during the pandemic	The AMENCA 3 partners were able to deliver a number of new interventions that directly supported vulnerable members of the community and enabled businesses to endure the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.
Farmers maintaining connection to partners in agribusiness and cooperatives, during the outbreak and through the recovery period	In 2020, AMENCA 3 pivoted to support a COVID-19 response. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in AMENCA 3 providing a humanitarian intervention alongside agriculture-focused activities. In response to DFAT's call for a COVID pivot, AMENCA partners provided food security responses.

ANNEX 2: INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender Equality
INN641 – Support to the International Committee of the Red Cross in the PTs Investment duration: 2021-22; Budget: \$11.9m	2022	4	4	4
	2021	n/a	n/a	n/a

FINAL INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE RATINGS

Investment Details	Year	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Gender Equality
INL608 – Palestinian Farmers Connecting to Market (AMENCA3) Investment duration: 2014-21; Budget: \$28.5m	2022 FIMR	5	4	5
	2021 IMR	5	4	5

Definitions of rating scale:

Satisfactory (4, 5 and 6)

6 = Very good; satisfies criteria in all areas.

5 = Good; satisfies criteria in almost all areas.

4 = Adequate; on balance, satisfies criteria; does not fail in any major area.

Less than satisfactory (1, 2 and 3)

3 = Less than adequate; on balance does not satisfy criteria and/or fails in at least one major area.

2 = Poor; does not satisfy criteria in major areas.

1 = Very poor; does not satisfy criteria in many major area.