



C1_N-PS-1

Support for EQA in Preparing the Palestine 7th National Report (7NR) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) INCEPTION REPORT

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WATER AND ENVIRONMENT SUPPORT - BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE ACTION IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD SOUTH REGION

The regional EU funded “Water Environment Support-Biodiversity and Climate Action (WES-BCA)” project is the continuation of WES project and capitalises on the experience of three more successful predecessor regional EU funded projects SWIM-Horizon2020 SM, SWIM SM and Horizon 2020 CB/MEP. It supports the countries of the Southern Neighbourhood Region in addressing the improvement and protection of the environment, the restoration of biodiversity and the management of scarce water resources, while enhancing the resilience to climate change in the Mediterranean region, strengthening the formulation and enforcement of the relevant policies of the Partner Countries (PCs) and the two regional political frameworks, namely the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the Barcelona Convention. WES-BCA will enhance the capacity of relevant stakeholders in order to support them in formulating and implementing policies in the aforementioned issues, raise awareness, increase knowledge and improve public understanding, stimulating behavioural changes needed for appropriate climate action and environmental protection.

WES-BCA has two components which will run hand-in-hand:

COMPONENT I (Water, Biodiversity and Environment) with the specific objectives:

- to promote an integrated approach to biodiversity protection/restoration and pollution reduction/prevention,
- to manage more efficiently scarce water resources in the Southern Neighbourhood.

COMPONENT II (Communication and Outreach) with the specific objective:

- to raise awareness and better understanding by the general public (and specific segments of the population) including youth and women are promoted stimulating adoption of appropriate behaviours and attitudes towards improved climate action and effective environmental protection.

DISCLAIMER:

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ABBREVIATIONS

6NR	Sixth National Report
7NR	Seventh National Report
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CHM	Clearing-House Mechanism
EQA	Environment Quality Authority
FP	Focal Point
KBA	Key Biodiversity Area
KM-GBF	Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
ORT	Online Reporting Tool
WES-BCA	Water and Environment Support - Biodiversity Conservation Activity

0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

This Inception Report outlines the roadmap for the preparation of Palestine's 7th National Report (7NR) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Implemented under the WES-BCA support mechanism, Activity C1_N-PS-1 assists the Environment Quality Authority (EQA), serving as the National Focal Point (FP), in fulfilling its reporting agreement by assessing progress towards national and global targets in line with the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF).

The 7NR serves as the primary mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the KM-GBF, requiring an evidence-based approach. Its scope encompasses evaluating the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) 2022 and measuring progress towards Palestine's 17 National Targets using indicators defined in the Monitoring Framework. Furthermore, the report assesses how national actions contribute to the 23 Global Targets and the framework's long-term Goals, while also reporting on means of implementation such as resource mobilization and stakeholder engagement. Additionally, the assessment identifies specific technical and financial obstacles to inform future support requirements.

1 APPROACH AND DATA READINESS

1.1 REVIEW AND STAKEHOLDER CONTEXT

The inception phase focused on a high-level review of available data sources and defining the technical support required, working in close collaboration with the EQA. The team reviewed existing strategies and reports to assess the current availability of data. The scope of this phase focused on a rapid stocktaking of existing information aiming to determine how current data repositories can be best utilized for the 7NR. A portion of the data reviewed resulted from an extensive stakeholder engagement process conducted during the development of the revised NBSAP2022. This stakeholder process aimed to ensure the inclusive involvement of all sectors in mainstreaming biodiversity into national policy and aligning the strategy with global frameworks. This highly participatory process began with the Inaugural National Conference for the NBSAP on 8 November 2021 which introduced the strategy's formulation methodology to stakeholders. This was followed by weekly workshops starting from 25 November 2021. It continued with a Mid-term National Workshop of the NBSAP in February 2022 to review progress and facilitate inter-agency coordination. Throughout the year, the preparation of the NBSAP was further supported by over 30 technical workshops and 20 thematic focus group meetings conducted with nearly all ministries to brainstorm on critical topics and familiarize the local community with the strategy. It engaged a wide range of actors, including Government institutions (EQA, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Planning and Policy Development, Ministry of National Economy, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Palestinian Water Authority, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Risk Prevention and Agricultural Insurance Fund, Palestinian Agricultural Credit Institution), academia and research institutions (Birzeit University, Palestine Polytechnic University, Palestinian Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainability (PIBS), National Agricultural Research Center (NARC)), NGOs and civil society organizations (Palestinian Wildlife Society, Palestinian

Environmental NGOs Network (PENGON), Society for the Protection of Nature in Palestine (SPNP), Palestinian Hydrology Group), and local communities and indigenous groups (Representatives from Areas C, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem, including marginalized and vulnerable populations).

Within the framework of the WES-BCA project, the team of international and national experts engaged directly with the EQA through online meetings held on 10 September, 30 October, and 14 December 2025. These meetings were dedicated to launching the activity, defining the workplan, and conducting stocktaking of data to align the reporting process with the 7NR requirements.

1.2 KEY DATA SOURCES

The primary source of information for the 7NR is the Palestinian Clearing-House Mechanism (CHM) (<https://ps.chm-cbd.net/node/4>). The CHM serves as the central repository for Palestine's biodiversity data and strategic documents.

The review confirmed that the National CHM / Biological Diversity of the State of Palestine hosts the critical documents required for the 7NR, including, but not limited to the following:

- Palestinian Law no 7/1999 on the environment.
- 1st NBSAP, 1999.
- The National Strategy, Action Programme and Integrated Financing Strategy to Combat Desertification in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, 2012.
- National Adaptation Plan to Climate Change, 2016.
- 6th National Report (6NR) to the CBD, 2021
- Fourth National Report on Biosafety to Cartagena Protocol, 2021.
- 2nd NBSAP, 2022.
- Action plans of the Palestinian National Biodiversity Strategy, 2023: Detailing specific actions for the implementation of the NBSAP.
- National Invasive species Strategy and Action Plan, 2023.
- Thematic Databases: Information on projects, publications, specific biodiversity threats, etc.

In addition to the above, EQA shared with the WES-BCA team the report "Protected Areas Network for the State of Palestine", IUCN ROWA, 2023.

The availability of these documents on the national CHM allows for a coherent desk-based compilation of the 7NR, ensuring consistency with published national data.

1.3 CBD GUIDELINES AND REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

The preparation of the report is guided by the following key documents shared by the CBD Secretariat:

- Guidance and Template for the 7NR: Adopted in CBD/COP/DEC/16/32 (Annex I) and CBD/COP/DEC/15/6 (Annex II). Decision 15/6 established the reporting mechanism, while Decision 16/32 officially endorsed the final revised template (Sections I–V).
- KM-GBF: Established by CBD/COP/DEC/15/5 (original framework) and updated by CBD/COP/DEC/16/31. Decision 16/31 outlines the "Technical updates to the headline and binary indicators".

- Resource Manual for the 7NR (September 2025): which outlines the technical definitions and calculation methods for indicators.

Access to the CBD Decisions and the Resource manual is provided through the official 7NR portal <https://www.cbd.int/reports/nr7>.

While the Consultant will prepare the technical content and format the data according to the CBD templates, the official submission of the report remains the responsibility of the CBD FP (i.e., EQA). The EQA is the designated authority to submit the final document to the CBD Secretariat, ensuring official validation of the country's data.

1.4 REPORTING MODALITY

Although the CBD encourages countries to submit the 7NR through the Online Reporting Tool (ORT), submission may also be made in document form (e.g. pdf file), accompanied by an official letter to the CBD Secretariat (CBD/COP/DEC/15/5, Annex II, paragraph 10).

The preparation of the 7NR within this Activity follows the structure specified in CBD/COP/DEC/16/32/27.02.2025 and the Resource Manual for the 7NR/09.2025, in order to facilitate submission to the ORT by EQA. The WES-BCA team also considered the 7NR reporting requirements shared by EQA.

Given that the National Targets and Actions have not yet been uploaded to the ORT, a technical prerequisite for enabling the 7NR template online, this assignment focuses on the preparation of the 7NR in document format.

The initial review indicates that Palestine's 17 National Targets provide a strategic framework that generally follows the direction of the global goals and targets. The assessment focuses on the prescribed actions and the intent of the national targets, noting that the reporting will rely primarily on the data already compiled within the national system.

2 STRATEGIC STOCKTAKING AND ALIGNMENT

2.1 ALIGNMENT OF NATIONAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK

A review of the actions prescribed in the NBSAP 2022 and National Action Plan 2023 confirms that Palestine's planning framework is strategically aligned with the KM-GBF.

The national planning framework addresses the core areas of the global agenda. Targets related to conservation and restoration (National Targets 1, 2 and 3) align with global goals for protected areas, ecosystem restoration and species recovery, supported by actions such as the establishment of (a) protected area networks and (b) gene banks. Similarly, the framework addresses sustainable use and benefit-sharing (National Targets 6, 12 and 13) through plans (a) for sustainable agriculture, (b) ecotourism and (c) the preservation of traditional knowledge.

Regarding threat reduction, the national targets (Targets 7 and 8) cover (a) invasive alien species and (b) pollution management, focusing on solid and liquid waste and (c) pesticide reduction. Climate change (National Target 9) is addressed through (a) ecosystem-based adaptation strategies. The

framework also includes plans for implementation and mainstreaming (Targets 10, 14, 15, 16 and 17), covering (a) biosafety, (b) research, (c) education, (d) governance reform and (e) resource mobilization.

While the national targets address the primary areas of the global framework, certain specific elements, such as ocean acidification metrics or specific business reporting requirements, are less prominent in the national plan due to the specific local context. However, the overall strategic intent ensures that Palestine contributes meaningfully to the global biodiversity objectives.

2.2 MAPPING OF NATIONAL TARGETS TO THE KM-GBF

To facilitate the reporting process for the 7NR, a mapping exercise was conducted to identify correspondences between Palestine's 17 National Targets with the 23 Targets and 4 Goals of the KM-GBF. This matrix (Table 2-1) shows the relationships between national priorities and global commitments, serving as a guide for reporting progress in the 7NR.

TABLE 2-1: OVERVIEW OF THEMATIC RELEVANCE BETWEEN PALESTINIAN NATIONAL TARGETS AND GBF GOALS & TARGETS

Palestine National Target	GBF Target(s) / Goals of Thematic Relevance
National Target 1. By 2030, have an updated protected area and Key Biodiversity (KBA) network that is logical, science based and manageable covering >11% of the land and provide effective management by 2050	GBF Goal A - Maintain, enhance, or restore the integrity, connectivity and resilience of all ecosystems, substantially increasing the area of natural ecosystems, and significantly reducing species extinction risk by 2050. GBF Target 3 (Protected Areas) - Ensure that by 2030 at least 30% of terrestrial, inland water, coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed with equitable governance and indigenous rights recognized. GBF Target 1 (Spatial Planning) - Ensure all areas are participatory, integrated, biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance close to zero by 2030.
National Target 2. Reclaim/protect 50% of freshwater degraded areas (springs like Al-Auja) by 2050 under a scenario of sovereignty/independence. Under a lack of independence scenario, protect 50% of those in Areas A and B by 2030. For marine areas, develop a management plan with good data collection by 2030 and achieve significant improvement in protection by 2050.	GBF Goal A - Protect and restore ecosystems to maintain ecosystem integrity, functions, resilience and connectivity by 2050. GBF Target 2 (Restoration) - By 2030, at least 30% of degraded terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems are under effective restoration to enhance biodiversity, ecological integrity, function and connectivity. GBF Target 3 (Protection) - Ensure area-based conservation measures effectively protect biodiversity.
National Target 3. Ensure active management actions to enable the recovery and conservation of species and genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species, including via ex situ conservation.	GBF Goal A - Halt human-induced extinction, reduce extinction risk and maintain genetic diversity. GBF Target 4 (Species Recovery & Human-Wildlife Management) - Ensure urgent management actions to halt human-induced extinction of threatened species, conserve genetic diversity, and manage human-wildlife interactions to support coexistence.
National Target 4. Develop strategies with different scenarios and action plans to deal with threats of occupation and colonization to biodiversity.	GBF Goal D - Secure adequate means of implementation (financial resources, capacity-building, technology transfer, cooperation) and ensure equitable access for all Parties to fully implement the GBF.

Palestine National Target	GBF Target(s) / Goals of Thematic Relevance
	GBF Goal B - Biodiversity is sustainably used and nature's contributions (ecosystem services) are valued and enhanced. GBF Target 22 (Participation & Rights) - Ensure full, equitable, inclusive and effective participation in biodiversity decision-making and access to justice and information, including for indigenous peoples and local communities, women, youth and persons with disabilities.
National Target 5. Effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to avoid or reduce human-wildlife conflict.	GBF Goal A - Protect species and ecosystems, including coexistence with wildlife. GBF Target 4 - Effective management of human-wildlife interactions to minimize conflict and support coexistence.
National Target 6. Ensure that the harvesting, trade, and use of any wild species is managed to protect biodiversity, with laws and policies ensuring sustainable, safe, and legal use and effective enforcement.	GBF Goal A - Maintain species and ecosystems. GBF Goal B - Promote sustainable use of biodiversity and secure nature's contributions to people. GBF Target 5 (Trade/Use) - Ensure sustainable, safe and legal use, harvesting, and trade of wild species, protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities. GBF Target 9 (Benefits) - Management of wild species to provide social, economic, and environmental benefits.
National Target 7. Control pathways for the introduction of invasive alien species (IAS), preventing or reducing their introduction and establishment, and control or eradicate IAS to reduce their impacts, focusing on priority species and sites.	GBF Goal A - Reduce direct threats to biodiversity to maintain ecosystem functions. GBF Target 6 (Invasive Species) - Prevent, manage, reduce, or eradicate priority invasive alien species and control pathways by 2030.
National Target 8. Reduce solid and liquid waste pollution by 30% by 2030 and by 60% by 2050.	GBF Goal A - Address pollution as a direct driver of biodiversity loss. GBF Target 7 (Pollution) - Reduce pollution risks from all sources to levels not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, including excess nutrients, pesticides, and plastics.
National Target 9. Minimize the impact of climate change on biodiversity, contribute to mitigation and adaptation through ecosystem-based approaches, contributing at least 10 GtCO ₂ e per year to global mitigation efforts, and ensure mitigation and adaptation avoid negative biodiversity impacts.	GBF Goal A - Support resilient ecosystems and species status. GBF Goal B - Maintain nature's contributions to people, including climate regulation. GBF Target 8 (Climate Change) - Minimize climate change impacts on biodiversity through mitigation, adaptation, and nature-based solutions. GBF Target 11 (Nature's Contributions) - Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people, such as regulation of air, water, climate, and soil health.
National Target 10. Establish, strengthen capacity for, and implement measures to prevent, manage or control potential adverse impacts of biotechnology on biodiversity and human health.	GBF Goal A - Protect genetic and species diversity. GBF Target 17 (Biosafety) - Establish and implement biosafety measures for biotechnology and handling of genetic resources, consistent with CBD provisions.

Palestine National Target	GBF Target(s) / Goals of Thematic Relevance
National Target 11. Enhance responsible living, production, and consumption that strengthens biodiversity and people's well-being.	GBF Goal B - Enable sustainable use of biodiversity and maintenance of nature's contributions. GBF Target 15 (Business/Production) - Encourage business to adopt sustainable practices and disclose biodiversity impacts and dependencies. GBF Target 16 (Consumption) - Promote sustainable consumption patterns and reduce negative impacts of overconsumption and waste. GBF Target 12 (Urban Green Spaces) - Increase access to and benefits from urban green and blue spaces, enhancing biodiversity and well-being. GBF Target 18 (Incentives) - Identify and eliminate harmful incentives; scale up positive incentives.
National Target 12. Develop policies, procedures, and systems to enhance equitable benefits from nature (e.g., ecotourism, medicinal plants, recreation) while protecting biodiversity.	GBF Goal B - Sustainable use for people's benefit. GBF Goal C (Benefit Sharing) - Fair and equitable sharing of monetary and non-monetary benefits from genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge. GBF Target 9 (Benefits from Wild Species) - Ensure sustainable management and use of wild species to provide social, economic, and environmental benefits. GBF Target 13 (Access & Benefit Sharing) - Ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources and digital sequence information, with appropriate access.
National Target 13. Develop sustainable agricultural production ensuring food sovereignty, enhanced biodiversity, and fair and equitable benefits to all.	GBF Goal B - Support sustainable use and enhance nature's contributions in production systems. GBF Target 10 (Sustainable Agriculture) - Ensure sustainable management of agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries, and forestry, increasing biodiversity-friendly practices and resilience. GBF Target 4 (Genetic Diversity) - Conserve genetic diversity.
National Target 14. Expand and modernize research on habitats, ecosystems, species, and traditional practices and ensure equitable use and sharing of knowledge.	GBF Goal D - Build capacity, knowledge, and cooperation for implementation. GBF Target 21 (Knowledge/Data) - Ensure best available data, information, and knowledge are accessible to guide governance, monitoring, and research.
National Target 15. Mainstream biodiversity across all sectors of Palestinian society, ensuring action plans with tangible and measurable biodiversity protection outcomes.	GBF Goal D - Mainstream biodiversity into national and sectoral planning. GBF Target 14 (Mainstreaming) - Integrate biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning, development and financial flows. GBF Target 21 (Awareness) - Strengthen communication, awareness-raising, and education to support mainstreaming.
National Target 16. Restructure entities engaged in biodiversity research, education and conservation to function more effectively as a connected conservation network.	GBF Goal D - Strengthen institutional frameworks and capacities. GBF Target 14 (Alignment of Flows) - Align public and private financial and planning flows with GBF goals and targets. GBF Target 20 (Capacity Building) - Strengthen capacity for biodiversity governance and implementation.
National Target 17. Increase financial and non-financial resources for biodiversity in the State of Palestine (double by 2030 and quadruple by 2050).	GBF Goal D - Mobilize adequate means of implementation. GBF Target 19 (Financial Resources) - Substantially increase biodiversity-related funding from all sources in an effective,

Palestine National Target	GBF Target(s) / Goals of Thematic Relevance
	accessible manner to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans.

3 IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH AND WORKPLAN

3.1 TECHNICAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The stocktaking identified specific areas where technical support will be focused during the preparation of the report. The priority is to translate the qualitative and quantitative data found in the CHM and national strategies into the specific format required by the CBD templates.

- Technical support to be provided by the WES-BCA team of experts within Activity C1_N-PS-1, and in close collaboration with EQA, will focus on: Data Synthesis: Consolidating the scattered data from the NBSAP, National Action Plan and 6NR into the coherent narrative required for the 7NR.
- Binary Indicators: Assisting the EQA in interpreting and answering the binary monitoring questions based on the existing legal and policy frameworks.
- Headline and National Indicators: Implementation of indicators to assess progress with quantitative or qualitative data. This involves mapping existing national datasets to the mandatory KM-GBF Headline Indicators where feasible.

3.2 WORK PLAN AND TIMELINE

Activity C1_N-PS-1 of WES-BCA is currently under implementation, with a total duration of ten months and a level of effort of 70 person-days, split between international and local key experts, in accordance with the approved ToR. Its implementation requires close collaboration with EQA.

The project kicked off in September 2025 with a remote meeting to align on the timeline and objectives, followed by an inception phase to review existing data and identify any gaps. Throughout the process, the team has held meetings with EQA to ensure effective communication and to gather the necessary inputs. This information is being used to draft the 7NR.

The subsequent months will focus on Task 3, which includes completing the synthesis of data from the CHM and EQA records, followed by drafting the remaining 7NR sections, taking into account the CBD deadline for 7NR reporting of 28 February 2026. The final phase will involve review by EQA prior to submission to the CBD Secretariat.