



Water for War-torn West Bank: The Emergency Water Operations Center (EWOC)

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In April 2002, events in the West Bank left hundreds of thousands of people without fresh water. Recognizing the increased threat to public health due to increased exposure to water-borne diseases, USAID, the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA), local NGOs, major international organizations such as the U.N. Development Program (UNDP) and OXFAM/UK collaborated to form the Emergency Water Operations Center (EWOC) to avert a health crisis and to repair damaged water systems.

EWOC now operates out of a fully functional office established by USAID through EHP. The Center diverted \$1.1 million and engineering expertise from long-term development programs to pay for immediate procurement of essential commodities. EWOC also provided engineering and infrastructure. For example, a new generator was installed in Nablus, and four kilometers of new pipes carried water to 10,000 residents of Za'atara, near Bethlehem, just three weeks after tank treads destroyed the old system.

When access to Jenin was first permitted, Jenin had been under 24-hour curfew and without water for over two weeks. EWOC delivered bottled water and set up filling points to supply water from tanker trucks and undamaged municipal pipelines.

The EWOC effort is now primarily supported by PWA and by USAID through EHP. Support includes technical assistance, operational and

support costs and procurement of emergency commodities. Currently, USAID has procured \$5.5 million for emergency repair work, restocking supplies and procurement of emergency commodities.



The EWOC Planning Committee reviews and approves EWOC activities. The committee is composed of representatives from PWA, USAID, West Bank Water Department (WBWD) and CDM/EHP.



EWOC assistance is prioritized according to four categories:

1. Emergencies
2. Urgent requirements in which the need is pronounced but adequate coping mechanisms are in place to temporarily fill gaps in service delivery
3. Replacement of depleted inventories, especially of pipes and associated materials
4. Preparedness activities—which include upgrading the capacity of local engineers and managers to respond to future emergencies.

The “preparedness” component goes beyond emergency assistance and towards a more sustainable water security program.

Source: USAID’s Frontlines, April 2003; Jerusalem Times; CDM/EHP/West Bank

To learn more about EWOC, please go to www.usaid.gov/wbg or contact the following:

Louis O’Brien, obrienlp@cdm.com
Chief-of-Party, CDM/EHP
EWOC Planning Committee
First Floor, Bldg. Behind the World Bank
Al-Ram, West Bank
Tel.: 972-2-234-2068
Fax: 972-2-234-2066

Eddy Perez, perezzea@cdm.com
Activity Manager, CDM/EHP

WEST BANK FACT SHEET

Area: slightly smaller than Delaware

Climate: temperate; temperature and precipitation vary with altitude—warm to hot summers, cool to mild winters

Terrain: mostly rugged dissected upland, some vegetation in west, but barren in east

Environment (current issues): adequacy of fresh water supply; sewage treatment

Population: 2,163,667 (July 2002 est.)
note: in addition, there are about 187,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank and fewer than 177,000 in East Jerusalem (February 2002 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 21.24 deaths/1,000 live births (2002 est.)

Ethnic groups: Palestinian Arab and other 83%, Jewish 17%

Unemployment rate: 26% (includes Gaza Strip) (2001 est.)

Agriculture products: olives, citrus, vegetables, beef, dairy products