

PALESTINE LAND SECTOR ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND PAPER



ASSESSMENT OF THE LAND SECTOR IN PALESTINE. BACKGROUND PAPER.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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ABOUT THIS PAPER

This background paper was developed by an independent consultant in collaboration with the Urban Training and Studies Institute of Egypt in preparation of the regional report *Governing Land in the Middle East* that covers eleven countries in the Middle East, namely Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Each paper explores and gives an indication of the country's capacities in delivering good land governance by measuring its performance on the core land administration functions: land tenure, land value, land use, land development and land disputes resolution. It also maps the existing learning offer on land governance, identifying the key institutions and the courses available.

The background paper is part of the research work carried out by the Arab Land Initiative under the Arab Region Programme on Good Land Governance in Support to Inclusive Development, Peace and Stability funded by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany (BMZ). Its preparation was managed and coordinated by the Urban Training and Studies Institute (UTI) of the Housing and Building National Research Center (HBRC), Egypt, with the support of UN-Habitat and the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN). The opinions presented in this paper are of the author and do not reflect the views of GLTN, UN-Habitat, its Governing Bodies or Member States.

THE GLOBAL LAND TOOL NETWORK AND THE ARAB LAND INITIATIVE – GLTN is a multi-sectoral alliance of international partners committed to increasing access to land and tenure security for all, with a focus on the poor, women and youth. The Network's partners include international rural and urban civil society organizations, research and training institutions, bilateral and multilateral organizations, and international professional bodies. In 2016, GLTN Partners, led by UN-Habitat and the World Bank, launched the Arab Land Initiative to promote equal access to land, peace, stability and economic growth in the Arab region through good land governance and transparent, efficient and affordable land administration systems. The Initiative aims at empowering land champions from the region by developing capacities, increasing collaboration and promote innovation, learning and sharing of best practices. It also supports the implementation of land gender-responsive and fit-for-purpose land tools and approaches at national and local level. The Research Innovation Fund is one of the streams of work of the Arab Land Initiative.

For more information, please consult the referenced documents, visit www.gltn.net or arablandinitiative.gltn.net.

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ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| ACF | Action Against Hunger |
| AMAN | Coalition for Accountability and Integrity |
| APLA | Association of Palestinian Local Authorities |
| ARIJ | Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem |
| ENABLE | Belgian Development Agency |
| GIS | Geographic Information System |
| GIZ | Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit |
| GLTN | Global Land Tool Network |
| GPS | Global Positioning System |
| LRC | Land Research Centre |
| LWSC | Land and Water Settlement Commission |
| MoLG | Ministry of Local Government |
| NIS | New Israeli Shekels |
| NUA | New Urban Agenda |
| PCBS | Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics |
| PLA | Palestinian Land Authority |
| PLO | Palestinian Liberation Organization |
| PNA | Palestinian National Authority |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| SDSS | Spatial Decision Support System |
| UNECE | United Nations Economic Commission for Europe |
| UN-Habitat | United Nations Human Settlements Programme |
| USD | United States Dollars |
| UTI | Urban Training and Studies Institute |

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper was developed as part of the Arab Land Initiative, under the “Arab Region Programme on Good Land Governance in Support to Inclusive Development, Peace and Stability” and through a collaboration between the Urban Training and Studies Institute (UTI), the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat). The paper presents the results of a Palestine a land sector assessment conducted used quantitative and qualitative methods to collect, process and analyse primary and secondary data on land management. Primary data was collected using questionnaires with respondents from different government, international, civil, and academic organizations related to land management. Descriptive statistical analysis analysed the quantitative primary data, while the content analysis approach was used to analyse the qualitative primary data.

Palestine is under Israeli occupation, which controls most of its lands, natural resources, and borders. Its land management processes are complex and unique. However, this precarious situation does not prevent Palestinians from thinking and working within the available possibilities to develop their land administration sector in line with their vision: a State of Palestine with sovereignty over land, borders and natural resources within the framework of international laws.

In Palestine, there is no centralized and comprehensive framework for land administration because land-related institutions are still influenced by the political and historical legacy of successive foreign occupations and control: the Ottoman Empire until 1918, the British mandate until 1948, and the Israeli occupation currently controlling about 78 per cent of historical Palestine. Between 1948 and 1967, the West Bank and East Jerusalem were administered by Jordan, while the Gaza Strip was administered by Egypt. Following the 1967 war, Israel took control of all Palestinian lands, including the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian lands are still governed by overlapping Ottoman, British, Jordanian and Egyptian legislation, as well as Israeli military orders. Only around 30 per cent of Palestinian lands were formally registered prior to the 1967 Israeli occupation. This factor allows the Israeli occupation to use legal loopholes to control Palestinian properties in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Currently, over 45 per cent of Palestinian land remains unregistered, and the expansion of illegal settlements continues. This substantial gap generates major issues and hurdles for the registration, valuation, and development of Palestinian land.

Regarding land tenure issues, there is a general lack of information on land tenure in the Palestinian land administration system, particularly regarding women’s land tenure rights. Living with perpetual violent conflict – the 1948 war, the 1967 war, the popular uprisings in 1987, the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000, the Gaza war in 2014, and the war on Gaza in 2021 – large numbers of Palestinians are frequently expelled from their homeland. In addition, Israeli policies and practices play a significant role in the current displacement of Palestinians from their lands, particularly in Area C and East Jerusalem City (e.g. removal of 27 families from the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood). Further, internal Palestinian disputes, whether partisan or familial, uproot Palestinian families from their lands and assets and the population is not sufficiently aware of the procedures for securing their property rights.

The cost of acquiring land and homes varies significantly between urban and rural locations. Obtaining funds and loans to purchase land and property is not particularly difficult; however, it is slightly more difficult for women than for men. Palestine has a cadastral system, although it does not cover all Palestinian territories due to geopolitical limitations. Its digital information infrastructure is inadequate and ineffective in covering all

landholding types. The procedure of registering new lands and real estate, as well as modifying existing registrations, is generally straightforward if the appropriate documentation is present but expensive. In Palestine, land registration costs are around USD 300, in addition to a tax of 2-3 per cent of the property's worth in the West Bank and 1-2 per cent in Gaza.

Regarding land valuation, the appraisal system for lands and properties does not uniformly or comprehensively cover all geographic regions and types of landholdings. It is more concentrated in Palestinian cities and towns than in rural areas and outside of urban areas. Property valuation systems are not subject to clear and defined rules but rather to the jurisprudence and experiences of individual valuers. There is a system for collecting taxes on land and real estate, but again more prevalent in urban regions than in rural ones. It should also be highlighted that Palestinian municipalities lack the authority to collect taxes directly within towns and communities since the central government collects and distributes taxes to municipalities. Under this unfair and opaque system, it is difficult for towns to manage and develop urban land.

Regarding land use and development, the planning and development of land uses at national and regional level is weak, largely due to the geopolitical divisions in Palestine. However, the process is more effective at local level and in cities. Generally, the private sector has more influence over land development projects than the government, especially at the local level. While there is a regulatory framework in place, land laws are numerous, outdated, not harmonized within the Palestinian legal framework and not applied in all Palestinian areas. Laws and mechanisms to acquire private lands for development exist; however, they are ineffective and unfair due to being poorly elaborated and weak application. The government's inability to compensate land and real estate owners weakens its position in the process of acquiring and developing lands, especially in urban areas.

Regarding land disputes resolution, there is a formal system in place, but the procedures take a very long time and may extend over many years, pushing the population to resort to informal systems such as tribal courts and family solutions. The formal system for resolving land disputes lacks judges and is hampered by weak and contradicting laws. Palestinian women do not suffer direct discrimination under the formal system; however, discrimination is rife in informal systems such as tribal and family arrangements. Some statistics indicate that Palestinian women's landownership does not exceed 33 per cent of registered lands.

Regarding the institutional aspect of land management, Palestinian Government organizations are generally aware of the importance of developing the land administration sector. The government has established the Palestinian Land Authority (PLA) and the Palestinian Land and Water Settlement Commission (LWSC) based on the Road Map for Reforming the Palestinian Land Sector endorsed by the Cabinet in 2017. The Lands Sector Strategy for Palestine (2021–2023) was developed mainly by the PLA, LWSC and World Bank. This strategy is one of the important initiatives for reforming the Palestinian Land Sector. It identified five main objectives: consolidating and protecting property rights; raising efficiency and production capacity for land transactions; conducting a comprehensive valuation of the registered property; standardization of the geodetic reference, and protection and developing state land. The Palestinian authorities issued Law No. 6 of 2010, establishing the National Council for Lands, but the law is unfortunately still not implemented (PNA, 2010). Additionally, land-related institutions have conflicting roles and mandates. Although land management systems are central to their roles, systems for monitoring functions of institutions working in land management remain weak.

The Palestinian government relies heavily on external grants from organizations such as the World Bank and UN-Habitat to undertake their land registration work. The competent land institutions lack the financial

resources to develop the sector and the land administration field lacks qualified and specialized human resources.

The training departments of Palestinian land institutions need financial support to build the technical capacities of the sector and largely rely on international training projects. Land-related institutions also need sophisticated tools and approaches that can support land management. Many institutions working in land administration have limited equipment and software to develop the land sector, such as remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS). They also need a clear structure with specific spatial data standards. The government is currently working on a project to prepare and develop standards for spatial data.

Regarding scientific research related to land management in Palestine, there is no strategy to promote land research. Most current research is done by individual independent researchers or as part of master's programmes in geography, engineering, planning, law and public administration. Most of these efforts focus on the impact of political and geopolitical factors on Palestinian land-use planning and development. Important research titles in land management are lacking, such as land governance; land laws and justice aspects; rural land development; real estate, valuation and taxation development; smart land-use planning; and global sustainability and land governance. There is a big gap between the outputs of scientific research on the land sector and their application by institutions working in land management. This disconnect weakens the scientific and practical impact of these research efforts in the Palestinian environment.

The sectors related to land administration – the government, universities and international and community institutions – do collaborate, however, without a systematic coordination framework. In addition, many international institutions implement development projects, particularly in the Jerusalem and Area C regions, but they suffer from poor coordination and have no clear and specific strategy, which leads to duplication and conflict in some of these projects.

The study recommends building and developing a comprehensive and unified system for land administration in Palestine. This study also recommends that Palestinian policymakers activate Law 6 of 2010 on the establishment of a National Council for the Palestinian Territories, headed by the President and with membership drawn from several Palestinian Government members and representatives of relevant community organizations. The National Council for the Palestinian Territories should prepare and develop a national strategic plan for land management. The draft Palestinian land law should be developed and approved, which has been on the agenda of the Legislative Council since 2004. It would enable the compilation, unification and harmonization of the legal provisions related to the management of land to remove the contradictions and overlaps. Moreover, new land tenure legislation would help fill the gaps in the current land laws that allow Israeli authorities to confiscate Palestinian lands, especially in Area C. The legislation should also promote Bedouin tenure and right to use, especially in Area C, and support women's rights to possess and use land and enhance recognition by both the formal and informal systems used in resolving land disputes.

This study also recommends completing the land and water settlement process to provide a base for developing the Palestinian land management system. More than 45 per cent of Palestinian West Bank land is still unregistered. Public landownership should be enhanced by developing land acquisition laws and investment plans. Also, financial compensation programmes should be provided to landowners, especially in urban areas.

Furthermore, the roles and mandates of the different land management stakeholders should be reviewed to eliminate potential conflict and inconsistency in assigning roles and mandates within the new land administration system. The institutional framework should be expanded by integrating all land management stakeholders, such as academia, international and civil organizations, as well as the private sector. Due to the political and geopolitical status in Palestine, the principle of decentralization in the land administration system should be promoted. In particular, the possibility of using a mixed system, especially between municipalities and ministries, should be further explored as a hybrid decentralized-centralized model. New tools for land management can be developed by adopting GLTN tools for land management and contextualizing them for Palestinian conditions, especially the long-standing political instability.

The World Bank funded a USD 12.6 million “Real Estate Development Project 2019 to 2023” project in the West Bank and Gaza. Despite this effort, the land administration sector still needs additional financial support, government support for land administration, as well as institutional support for PLA institutions to unify the land appraisal system. A tax collection mechanism should be developed to increase government revenues and strengthen the financial support of local authorities, especially municipalities, to enhance the municipal effort to manage and plan land in Palestinian cities. Technically, there is a need to unify and develop the digital land management system under the Palestinian national land council and to establish and develop the spatial decision support system (SDSS) for land management, especially in the PLA.

Regarding education, research and training aspects related to land management, a national strategic plan should guide the integration of land management issues into the education system, including school curricula and higher education curricula. Universities should function as educational, training, and research and development centres in order to support land management by establishing new academic programmes at undergraduate and postgraduate levels with additional focus on topics such as land laws and justice; real estate, valuation and taxation development; social development and land management; and global sustainability and land governance. New units and training programmes in land management should be established at Palestinian universities to support land management professionals.

Looking at scientific research on land management in Palestine, a strategic plan for national land research should be set up. This would be a joint effort together with the Palestinian Research Council at the Ministry of Higher Education, universities and research centres.

There is a further need to support universities as scientific research centres for land management development. Cooperation links should be developed between the proposed national Land Research Centre and the government, civil and international organizations, and the private sector. It would help fill the gap between scientific research and applied solutions. Effective mechanism tools to transfer scientific research outputs into the implemented process should follow, in cooperation with land management stakeholders, especially under the political instability challenges. Moreover, land research priorities need to be identified based on the evaluation of the research efforts’ impacts on land management to identify the gaps, needs, and proposed topics for land development in Palestine.

Finally, a strategic plan should be prepared to enhance potential collaboration among land management stakeholders in Palestine based on the SDGs, the New Urban Agenda (NUA), and the strategies of the State of Palestine.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sound land administration and sustainable land management are indispensable for economic, social and environmental development and vital for good governance. According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), land administration is the process of determining, recording and disseminating information about ownership, value and use of land and its associated resources (UNECE, 1996). This paper aims to assess the capacity of the land administration system in Palestine to handle the core land administration functions (land tenure, land value, land use, land development and land disputes resolution), which together support the overarching goal of sustainable social and economic development. It also aims to identify and map out the educational, organizational and training institutions in Palestine with learning offers related to land governance.

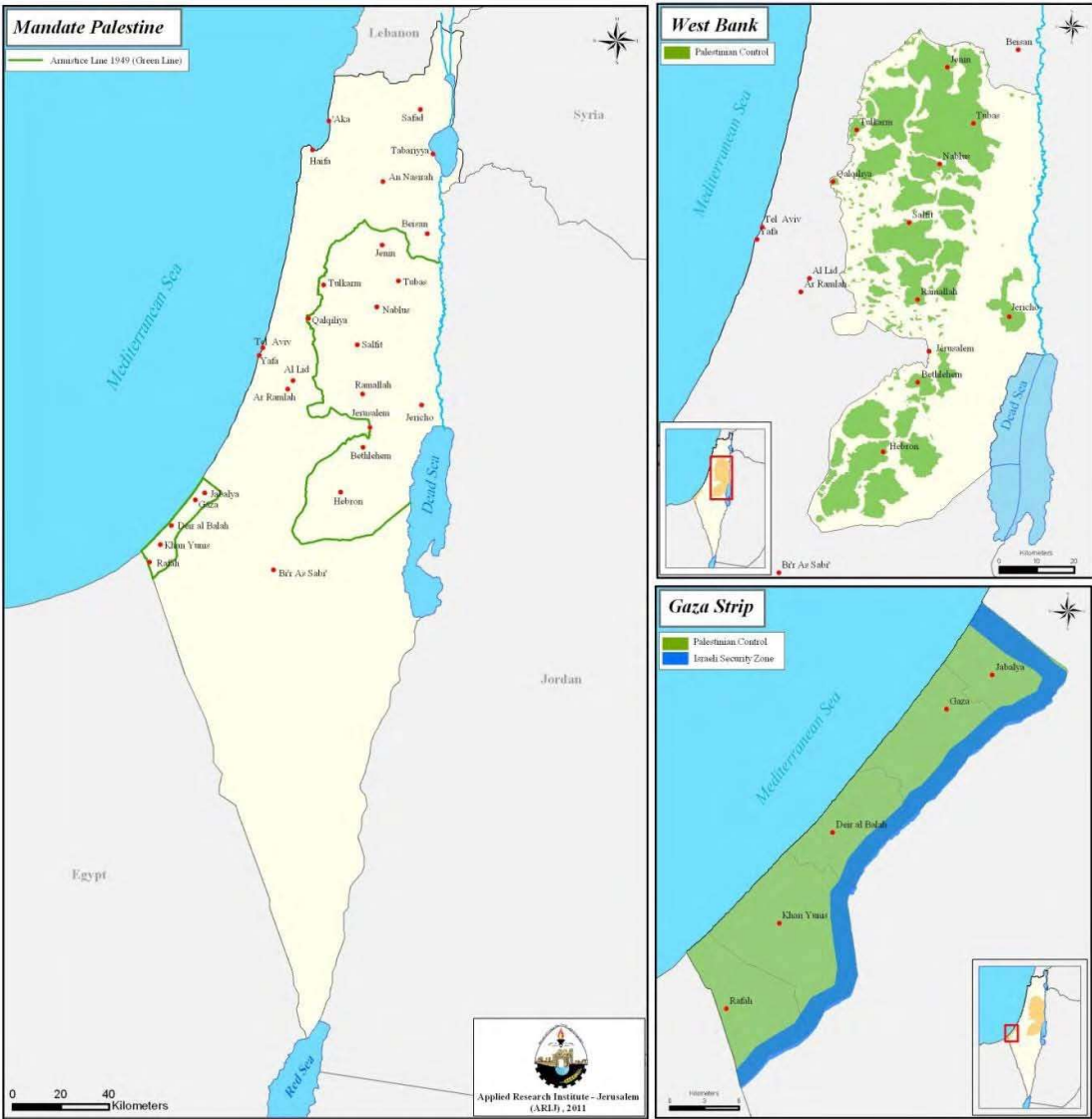


Figure 1: Map of Palestine.
Source: ARIJ (2011).

The occupied State of Palestine, “Palestine,” is located in the Eastern Mediterranean region. It shares borders with Jordan to the east, the Mediterranean Sea and Israel to the west, Lebanon to the north, and Egypt to the south. The territory of Palestine covers an area of 6,020 km² and is composed of two physically separated landmasses: the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The West Bank has an area of 5,655 km², and the Gaza Strip has an area of 365 km², as shown in Figure 1. Its geography is characterized by a diverse topography, and its terrain includes coastal and inner plains, mountains and hills. The elevation span reaches from a low 429 m below sea level to 1,030 m above sea level (MoLG, 2016).

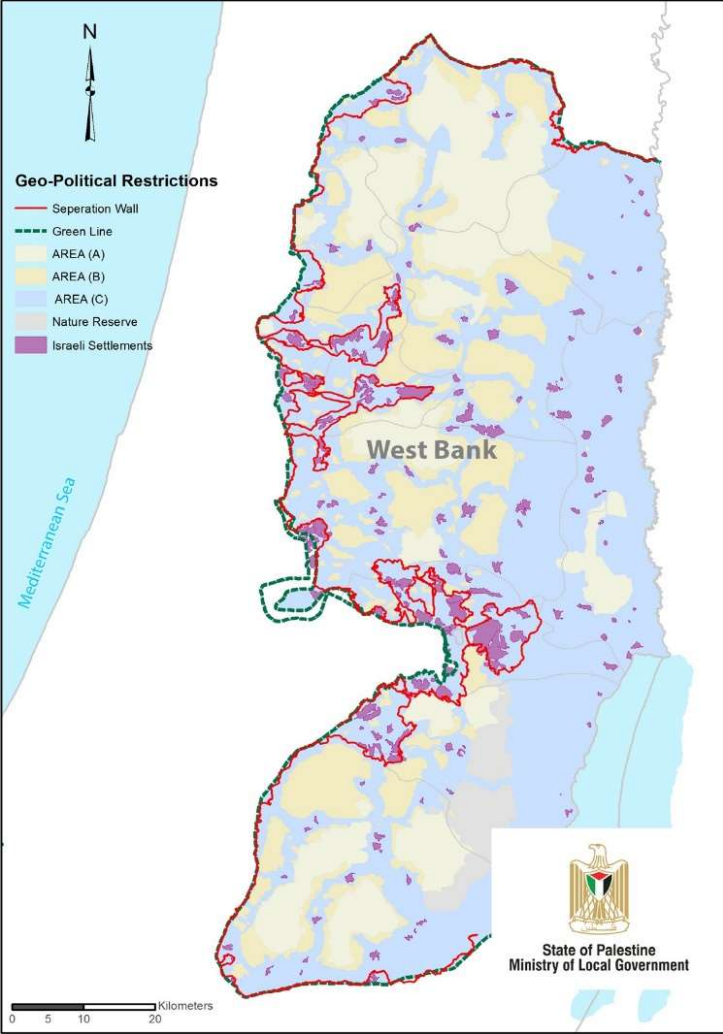


Figure 2: Geopolitical Restrictions.
Source: MoLG (2016).

Palestine is reeling under immense pressure due to the prevailing geopolitical conditions that have resulted in its physical fragmentation and social disintegration. The Oslo II Accords (1995) resulted in the division of Palestine into Areas A, B and C, which has led to cities and towns being disconnected from and not having full control over their hinterlands and the natural resources they contain – which are needed to sustain spatial development and ensure inclusiveness and equity. Area A constitutes 18 per cent of the West Bank area and falls under full Palestinian control, which includes internal functions

related to security and public order as well as planning. The main Palestinian cities and major urban areas fall under this zone. Area B constitutes 21 per cent of the West Bank territory, and here Palestinians have full control over civil administration issues, including planning-related functions, but Israel has the overriding responsibilities regarding security. Area C constitutes more than 61 per cent of the West Bank area; it includes most of the rural and peri-urban areas as well as agricultural lands and is under full Israeli control, as shown in Figure 2. Palestinians have no control over water, oil or gas resources, no matter the area in which they are located. Israeli geopolitical artefacts on the ground include but are not restricted to Israeli settlements, outposts, military bases, nature reserves, archaeological sites, bypass roads, seam zones and the Separation and Annexation Wall (ARIJ, 2011).

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip reaches 4.81 million people, of which 2.93 million are living in the West Bank (including more than 251,000 in East Jerusalem) and 1.88 million in the Gaza Strip. Palestine has a very high annual population growth rate that stands at 2.9 per cent. Currently, more than 7.5 million Palestinians live in exile, having been displaced from their villages and towns following the 1948 and 1967 wars. The majority of Palestinian refugees live in 31 UN-administered refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. There are also 1.5 million Palestinians who remained in their homeland (1948 territory, Israel today). The average size of a Palestinian family is estimated today at 5.2 persons, 4.9 in the West Bank and 5.7 in the Gaza Strip. Palestine has a very high share of youth among its population; almost 40 per cent are below 14 years old, 30 per cent are between 15 and 29 years old, and only 4.5 per cent are above 60 years old (PCBS, 2016).

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1. Categories of Actors and Sources Consulted

This study used quantitative and qualitative methods in collecting, processing, and analysing primary and secondary data related to land management issues in Palestine. Two forms of questionnaires designed and developed by the UTI and GLTN were used to collect the primary data. This study used an intentional sample of individuals from different stakeholders in Palestine, including government, international, civil and academic organizations related to the land management sector, totalling 41 respondents, as shown in Figure 3. About 80.5 per cent were men and 19.5 per cent were women, as shown in Figure 4.

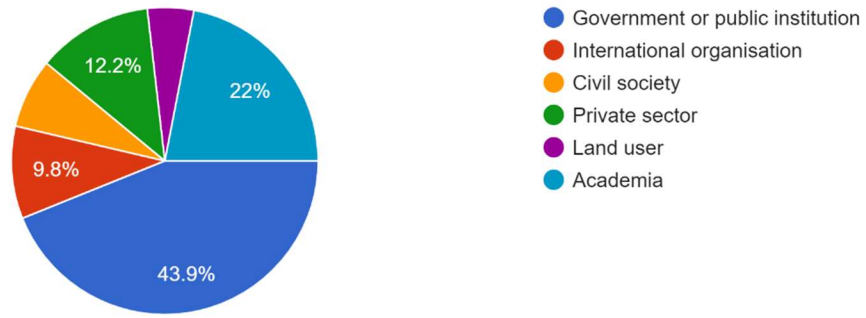


Figure 3: Type of Respondents.

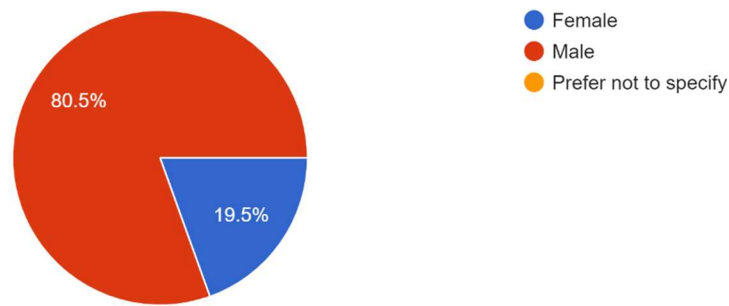


Figure 4: Gender.

Respondents were from different specialization fields, such as geography, urban planning, geomatics, civil engineering, spatial planning, management, finance, law, GIS and surveying, as shown in Figure 5.

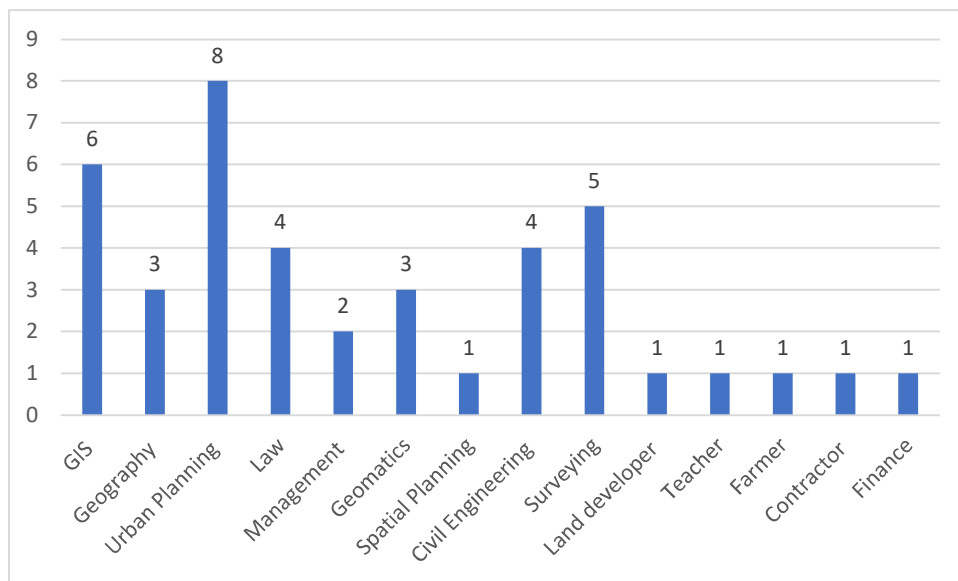


Figure 5: Specialization of Respondents.

2.2. Time Frame and Schedule for Conducting the Survey

In January 2021, the researcher conducted the first stage, data collection, by emailing more than 80 questionnaires as MS Word files and Google forms to various land management stakeholders in Palestine, as shown in Figure 5. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the closure of most Palestinian organizations, only a limited number of respondents submitted their feedback. The researcher therefore adapted the data collection approach by conducting face-to-face interviews with most of the respondents, manually filling in the questionnaires, and then inputting the filled questionnaires into the Google forms platform. The data collection stage was completed during February, March and April 2021, as shown in Table 1.

| Month | Number of questionnaires |
|--------------|--------------------------|
| January | 3 |
| February | 17 |
| March | 14 |
| April | 7 |
| Total | 41 |

Table 1: Time frame for conducting the study.

During this stage, more than 20 interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in the Palestinian land management sector and organizations such as the MoLG, PLA, LWSC, Ministry of Finance, UN-Habitat, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Al-Quds University, Al-Njah University, Birzeit University, Hebron University and some landowners and developers. Additionally, secondary data related to the land issues in Palestine were collected from different sources, such as government and non-government reports, as well as from research studies related to land development and spatial planning. This study used descriptive statistical analysis to analyse the quantitative primary data and content analysis approach to analyse the qualitative primary data.

2.3. Study Limitations

The geographical separation of the Palestinian territories as a result of the political and geopolitical reality has made it difficult to reach Palestinian geographical areas such as the Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem. The data collection process coincided with the lockdown and complete restriction of movements in the Palestinian territories due to the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the government sector and civil and international institutions, thus negatively affecting the speed and the completion of data collection. The lack of a clear institutional framework for land administration in Palestine resulted in multiple sources of information and difficulty in accessing information. However, all these challenges were overcome, most of the target sectors were reached, and the required data was collected.

3. LAND-RELATED LEGAL FRAMEWORK

“Compared to other countries in the world, the legal status of Palestine is complicated and unique because a number of authorities have ruled over Palestine throughout history. Various legal systems have prevailed in Palestine. Accordingly, multiple legal systems have affected the political and legal structures in Palestine. The partition of Palestine has also led to the emergence of complex and varying legal systems in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem, as well as within part of the Palestinian territory occupied in 1948.

Until the end of Ottoman rule in 1917, the legal system in Palestine was based primarily on principles of Islamic Law, although it was also influenced by the Latin system in Europe. In 1917, Ottoman rule was terminated by the establishment of the British mandate, which reformed the legal system in Palestine. The British added to the Ottoman legislation the principles of the Anglo-Saxon system (Common Law), which is based on judicial precedents. In 1948, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan ruled over the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The West Bank submitted then to the Jordanian legal system, which is influenced by the Latin system. On the other hand, the Egyptian Administration controlled the Gaza Strip. The Common Law established during the British mandate period remained effective in the Gaza Strip.

Following the 1967 war, the Israeli occupation seized control of the Palestinian legal system by imposing military law (military orders) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip territories. After annexing it in 1980, the Israeli occupation submitted East Jerusalem to the Israeli Domestic Law. According to the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements of 1993 (Oslo I Agreement), the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was established. Foundations were set for the Israeli-Palestinian agreements that regulate PNA powers and authorities. Consolidation and approximation of various legal systems operative in the Palestinian territories are the most important legal issues to date.

Regarding the land legal system in Palestine, the land laws and regulations are by origin a mixture of traditions and rules, some of which date back to the early days of Islam, some to the time of the Ottoman rule, some to the time of the British mandate, and others introduced by the Jordanian and Israeli authorities. Like any other Muslim country, Palestinian land regulations were directly affected by the Islamic land laws; Islam allowed private ownership, but within the natural needs and requirements for a living (Jamal Al-Din, 1966). During Ottoman rule in Palestine, many ordinances and land laws were passed; the most important and well known is the Land Code of 1858, which aimed to increase agricultural production and tax collection. According to this Code,

the first governmental land registries, called *Tapu*, were established in 1859 (Tannous, 1951).”¹

“The Ottoman land laws, which were partly affected by the French land regulations, classified the lands of Palestine into six categories (Tamim, 1995):

- *Mulk*, or land held in absolute ownership. The holder of this land exercised complete rights of utilization and exploitation, representing “free simple” ownership.
- *Miri* land. The holding right of this land belonged to the state, while the *tasarrouf* (utilization) rights were given to the individuals pending specific conditions, like paying a tithe to the state.
- *Waqf* land. *Waqf* is a special Muslim law. It is the transfer of landownership to the Deity to be used for educational or charity institutions or purposes.
- Public or *metruk* land. This represents the land left for roads or assigned as common lands, such as pastures and woodlands. It is used by the community as a whole and cannot be sold or disposed of by individuals.
- *Mewat* (meaning dead) land. This is land that is not owned or used by anybody and is situated beyond a distance of one and a half miles from the buildings and from which a man’s voice could not be heard (a considerable share of the land of Palestine).
- *Musha* land. *Musha* means an undefined share in a common property. It is a system of collective holdings whereby the land is held by a corporate body, usually a village, and parcels are distributed to members for use.

As a result of the First World War, Palestine fell under British occupation. Under the British mandate, the main classes of land tenure discussed previously remained without considerable change, except for the unclaimed *mewat* land, which was added to the state lands. According to the land ordinances of 1928, authorization was given to immediately subdivide *musha* land between the owners after defining the rights of each. One of the major British intentions behind this authorization was to facilitate the sale of land to the Jews. This resulted in a considerable decrease in *musha* land, which constituted the greatest portion of Palestine lands, and an increase in privately owned land. Some of the Palestinian owners of these lands had no choice but to sell their lands to the rich Jews under the pressure of the severe economic situation imposed by the British at the time (Tamim, 1995).”²

When Jordan took over the control of the West Bank in 1948, the Jordanian military governor issued a military proclamation that all laws existing on 15 May 1948 that applied to the West Bank of the Jordan

¹ <http://lawcenter.birzeit.edu/lawcenter/en/homepage/legal-status-in-palestine>

² A HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE LAND TENURE AND REGISTRATION SYSTEM IN PALESTINE by Najeh S. Tamim, Ph.D Faculty of Engineering An-Najah National University Nablus, West Bank

River should continue in force until otherwise amended or repealed. Later, when the two banks were joined together to form the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, this proclamation was canonized by the law amending the Law of Public Administration. These provisions were later embodied in the constitutions of Jordan that were passed consecutively in 1951 and 1952 (Shehadeh, 1982).

“The British mandate on Palestine resulted in the partitioning of the country into two parts. The first part constitutes about two-thirds of Palestine, where the state of Israel was established in 1948. The second part, which includes the West Bank and Gaza Strip, was controlled temporarily by Jordan and Egypt until 1967, when it was occupied by Israel (Tamim, 1995). Soon after the West Bank and Gaza Strip fell under Israeli occupation in 1967, the military authorities issued an order forbidding any land transactions without a written permit (Benvenisti et al., 1986), which implied that land registration became practically compulsory since that date.

Since then, many orders which affect land directly have been issued. These orders were not determined by physical planners but dictated by political considerations to confiscate as much of that land as possible. Among these was the reclassification of lands in the occupied territories. Some lands were classified as “rocky lands, unsuitable for cultivation”, others as “nature reserves”, and a third class as “essential military territory” (Benvenisti et al., 1986). The result was the confiscation of more lands as state lands, which were used later to build the Israeli settlements and achieve other political purposes.

In 1980, the Israeli Government adopted a new “legal” approach to state lands. This approach declared uncultivated, unregistered lands as state land. Under this declaration, all *mewat* lands and *miri* lands that were not cultivated for ten years or more became state lands and were liable for confiscation at any time. This judicial and administrative structure resulted in Israeli control of over 52 per cent of the area of the West Bank by 1986 (Benvenisti et al., 1986); 41 per cent of this area is under direct Israeli possession, while the other 11 per cent is placed under severe restrictions.”³

After the establishment of the PNA due to the Oslo I Accords (1993) between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, Presidential Decree No. 10 of 2002 establishing the Palestinian Territory Authority was issued on 5 September 2002, and it was published in the Palestinian magazine *Al-Waqi'a*, Issue No. 43. This decree was preceded by another decree in June 1996 to form the Lands Department in Jericho and to appoint a general director for it on 21 January 1995, noting that the Palestinian ministries had not been formed in the West Bank on this date. The Council of Ministers submitted a draft of the Land Law to the Legislative Council, upon which it was included on the Council’s agenda in March 2004 and approved in a general debate on 4 April 2005. Thereafter, it was referred to the Legal Committee and the Council’s Land Committee and subjected to several workshops and meeting sessions. The draft law remained stagnant in the committees of the Council without serious interference

³ <http://lawcenter.birzeit.edu/lawcenter/en/homepage/legal-status-in-palestine>

by the relevant governmental parties as a result of the disruption of the work of the Palestinian Legislative Council (Dyeh and Harb, 2007).

The most important land legislations that are still in force in the Palestinian territories can be summarized as follows:

- Presidential Decree No. 10 of 2002.
- The Ottoman Lands Law for the year 1854.
- Land Equity Settlement Law No. 9 of 1928.
- Land Law (Expropriation for Public Purposes) No. 24 of 1943.
- The Immovable Property Disposal Law promulgated in 1912.
- The Law of Dividing Joint Immovable Funds issued in the year 1911.
- Law of Placing Immovable Assets as Insurances, issued in the year 1912.
- Amended Land Law No. 25 of 1933.
- Land Transfer Law No. 39 of 1920.
- Land Disputes (Seizing) Law No. 12 of 1932.
- Land Registry Law No. 30 of 1944.
- Public Land Law No. 6 of 1942.
- Mewat Land Law No. 10 of 1921.
- Law No. 5 of 1960 regarding the Removal of Encroachments on Government Lands.
- Ordinance No. 575/75 regarding the Administration of Land Registration in force in the Governorates of Gaza.
- Land and Water Settlement Law No. 440 of 1952.
- Land Registry Law No. 30 of 1944.
- Law No. 1 of 1953 for the Administration and Authorization of State Land and Properties.
- Law No. 14 of 1953 for the Preservation of State Lands and Properties.
- Law No. 2 of 1961 to Acquire Lands for Public Projects.
- Law No. 6 of 1964 on the Registration of Immovable Property that was not Previously Registered, and the Amendments introduced to it.
- Towns, Villages and Building Planning Law No. 79 of the year 1966 and Amendments to it.
- Law Amending the Provisions relating to Immovable Property No. 51 of 1958.
- Survey System No. 6 of 1976.

In addition to the aforementioned legislations, there are more than 70 Israeli military orders still in effect in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, most notably in the West Bank the following orders: Order No. 1006 of 1982 regarding Appointments and Powers under the Law of Preserving State Lands and

Properties (logicians of Judea and Samaria), Ordinance No. 150 of 1967 concerning Abandoned Funds (Private Property) (Additional Instructions) (No. 1) (West Bank Region), Ordinance No. 25 of 1967 concerning Real Estate Transactions (West Bank District), Order No. 59 of 1967 concerning Property Government (West Bank Region), Ordinance No. 291 of 1968 concerning Land Settlement and Water Regulation (West Bank), Ordinance No. 450 of 1971 concerning Land Laws (West Bank), Ordinance No. 451 of 1971 concerning Land Defining and Surveying (West Bank), and Ordinance No. 875 of 1980 on Amending the Land Registration Law No. 10 (Judea and Samaria).

As for the most important military orders in the Gaza Strip, they are Ordinance No. 102 of 1967 concerning Real Estate Transactions (Gaza and North Sinai), Ordinance No. 335 of 1970 regarding Amending the Law of Land Acquisition for Public Purposes of 1943 (Gaza Strip and North Sinai), Ordinance No. 432 for the year 1972 concerning Government Funds in the Gaza Strip, and Order No. 494 of 1974 regarding the Granting and Registration of Real Estate Rights in the Gaza Strip.

Legislation related to lands in Palestine varies between Ottoman, British, Jordanian and Egyptian mandatory legislation and military orders (from the Israeli occupation), as well as the Palestinian regulations after the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (Abu Daiya and Harb, 2007).

With the end of the Jordanian mandate in the West Bank, about 30 per cent of West Bank lands were registered. In 2006, the Land Authority began the land settlement project in Palestine, but it did not achieve good results within ten years, which prompted the Palestinian Government to establish the Land and Water Settlement Commission (LWSC) to complete the settlement process and set the year 2023 as a target for the completion of the settlement work in Palestine.

The LWSC was established in 2016, pursuant to Law No. 7 of 2016. Since its inception, the Commission has established 109 offices in the West Bank, signed 218 settlement agreements with local authorities, issued 182 settlement orders, and published 143 settlement announcements in Palestinian cities and villages. The Settlement Authority wants to complete the settlement of approximately 3,740 km² (3,740,078 dunams) by the end of 2023 (LWSC, 2018; UN-Habitat, 2020). So far, it has completed more than 27 per cent of the required area. By the end of 2020, the LWSC had achieved more than 55 per cent of West Bank lands, with a shortfall of about 45 per cent (LWSC, 2019). Despite COVID-19 closures, LWSC completed the land settlement of 73,926 dunams in 2020.

Based on Law No. 6 of 2010 relating to the Land Authority, a decision was taken to form the National Council for the Palestinian Territories headed by the President, with membership drawn from the Palestinian Government and representatives of relevant community organizations. The decision defines the tasks and powers of the National Council of Lands as follows:

- Approval of general land policies.
- Approval of the plans, programmes and activities of the Land Authority.
- Approval of the annual budget of the Authority.
- Approval of the Authority's periodic and annual reports.
- Approval of the regulations and submitting them to the Council of Ministers for approval.

Unfortunately, this decision to establish the National Council of Lands is yet to be implemented.

4. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK AND STAKEHOLDERS

Before the establishment of the PNA in 1994, the Ottoman, British mandate, Jordanian laws, Egyptian authorities and the Israeli army controlled the land sector in the West Bank. More than 50 per cent of the Palestinian lands are still under the control of the Israeli army in the West Bank. After the establishment of the PNA, five governmental institutions participated in managing the Palestinian territories sector with different roles until the year 2002, with different roles, which are:

- The **Ministry of Justice** supervises the departments for registering lands and immovable property.
- The **Ministry of Housing's survey departments** are affiliated with it. It undertakes the process of auditing the plans related to the land registration transactions referred to it by the land registration departments.
- The **Ministry of Finance** supervises the land and building tax departments.
- The **Ministry of Local Government** is subordinate to the central, district and local planning departments. It carries out planning schemes related to municipalities and village councils, as well as issuing building permits.
- The **Land Authority** was established according to Presidential Decree No. 10 of 2002 to be the authority in charge of managing the land file, including land surveying and registration processes. Before its establishment, the Ministries of Justice, Public Works and Housing assumed these tasks.

The mission of the Land Authority is to preserve the right of ownership of land and other rights arising from it for citizens, the government, and civil and official institutions, by surveying and registering them in the land records and working to resolve land-related disputes, including disputes related to land boundaries and preserving government lands and properties and their disposal.

However, this mission is surrounded by some obstacles that prevent it from being fully implemented. On the one hand, the Israeli Government still maintains management of lands in about 50 per cent of the West Bank areas not under Palestinian control. The construction of the separation wall and the expansion of the settlements continuously impede Palestinian land administration. On the other hand, there are obstacles at the internal Palestinian level, summarized in the lack of the necessary professional, legal and political personnel and resources at the PNA to efficiently and transparently fulfil its function. Therefore, the Land Authority has become the only body that handles the management of the land file and is composed of the following three departments:

1. Land Registration Department,
2. Survey Department,
3. State Land Administration.

The PLA did not receive sufficient support to complete the land settlement process in Palestine, as the Land Authority settled about 57,943 dunams between 2006 and 2016. This achievement did not fulfil

the aspirations of the Palestinian Government, which prompted the government to establish the LWSC in 2016 in order to complete the settlement process by 2023 (Basayta, 2017).

The PLO received financing from the World Bank Trust Fund for Gaza and the West Bank and other funding organizations to conduct a West Bank and Gaza Real Estate Registration Project (RERP). This Project aimed to enhance tenure security and improve the real estate registration service in the Palestinian territories, especially in Areas A and B and support the systematic land registration approach. The PLA was established in 2002 and governed by PLA Law No. 6 of 2010. The PLA is the national agency responsible for property registration and related transactions, including transfers and mortgages and state property management. According to Law No. 7 of 2016, The LWSC was established in March 2016 as a separate agency from the PLA to accelerate the progress of systematic land registration. The LWSC has adopted a decentralized approach, working with local government units (LGUs) to complete settlement surveys under the guidance of the LWSC. Also, in 2020, UN-Habitat, LWSC, GLTN and the World Bank discussed and agreed on the integration role and complementarity of the approach in adopting the Social Tenure Domain Model along with the Land Administration Domain Model in building up the land information system spearheaded by the World Bank.

Official institutions active in the administration of land include the Land Authority, LWSC, MoLG and Ministry of Finance, with participation of other governmental institutions such as the Ministry of Public Works and Housing and the Ministry of Justice.

Regarding non-government organizations (NGOs), many international organizations are active in land management and spatial planning in Palestine, for example, UN-Habitat, GIZ, the Belgian Development Agency and the World Bank. As one of these initiatives, RERP focused on supporting the development of methodologies, the piloting of mass property valuation in the municipalities, and the development of proposals for the adoption of valuation standards and the regulation of the valuation profession. There is a need to develop mass valuation models appropriate to the underlying property market in the West Bank, initially covering the main urban areas to increase market transparency and reduce banking sector/mortgage risk, as well as improve the infrastructure for a recurrent property tax (World Bank, 2019).

UN-Habitat and the European Union (EU) launched the “Achieving Planning and Land Rights in Area C, West Bank” project in 2019. This Project aimed to improve the resilience and tenure security of Palestinian communities, through spatial economic planning and mapping of land rights, and to strengthen the capacity of Palestinian institutions to perform land-based functions and delivery of essential services in the West Bank territory, especially in Area C. Under this project, UN-Habitat, in partnership with the LWSC and with technical support from the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), is supporting the completion processes of land registration in the West Bank territory. On the other hand, UN-Habitat in Palestine, in partnership with the MoLG, is working on a land-use planning project titled “Master Plans for Palestinian Communities in Area C – ‘Cluster Plan’ in the Central Jordan Valley”. This Project came within the ambit of the EU-funded project titled: “Achieving Planning and Land Rights in Area C, West Bank, Palestine”. The “cluster project” aims to work in a participatory manner with Palestinian communities represented by local government units to prepare a detailed land-use plan and a development agenda for the targeted Palestinian communities to enhance their tenure security and

foster their resilience in light of the difficult geopolitical conditions, especially in Area C (UN-Habitat and MoLG, 2021).

Civil organizations and research centres related to land management include the Land Research Centre (LRC), Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN), ARIJ, Palestine Capital Market Authority, and Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA). NGOs played a significant role by conducting development projects in Palestine to support the Palestinian Government and the community in the land management sector.

For example, the project titled “In-depth Assessment of Women’s Access to and Ownership of Land and Productive Resources in the Occupied Palestinian Territory” was conducted by the Arab World for Research and Development and Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development. This study aimed to provide detailed guidance for policymakers, civil society organizations and other key actors to promote the adoption and enforcement of laws, policies and programmes to protect and fulfil women’s economic rights, with a specific focus on women’s access to land and productive resources. The main findings of this study showed that, under the prevailing conditions, the vast majority of women do not enjoy their land rights as stipulated by the law due to weak enforcement mechanisms. Together, these factors work against women’s access to their rights as they pertain to owning, controlling, and accessing land and other productive resources. This study recommended the establishment of a national working group on land, productive resources and gender equality. This group might include government ministries and agencies, as well as women’s and rights organizations. This group might be mandated to improve the enjoyment of rights by women in relation to land and productive resources through advocating with policymakers and legislators, as well as improving the quality of data and sharing of information and experiences, and networking between organizations in this field (PWWS, 2020).

Regarding capacity-building projects and training courses that are relevant to land administration functions in the government and NGOs, there are many short training courses and workshops that were conducted, such as the “GIS for Land-use Development” training course (5 days) conducted by ARIJ; the “Laws of the Anti-Corruption Commission for Land Authority employees” conducted by PLA; the “Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP)” training course conducted by GIZ; the “Training workshop on Global Real Estate Appraisal Systems” training course conducted by the Ministry of Finance (5 days); and the “GIS short course” conducted by LWSC.

Furthermore, the higher education organizations in Palestine play an important role in the Palestinian land management system by providing academic programmes related to land issues. Indeed, there is no specialized academic programme focusing on land issues, but there are many bachelor and master programmes that are related to land issues, such as geography, geomatics, urban planning, law, public administration and sustainable development. Additionally, there is an academic cooperation project between Birzeit University and the University of the West of England Bristol on issues related to real estate and land management. This cooperation project is still under development and processing to produce and develop academic and training courses. Also, there are some academic and research efforts between Al-Quds University and TU Berlin, Germany that focus on land administration issues, especially sustainable land development.

5. ANALYSIS OF LAND MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

The Palestinian Government recognizes the importance of land issues in supporting sustainable development, especially in light of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands and geopolitical divisions. 46 per cent of respondents in this study emphasized that the government is well aware of the importance of land issues in Palestine, as shown in Figure 6. Only 9.8 per cent of respondents stated that the Palestinian Government is “Not aware at all of the importance of land issues in supporting sustainable development”. This conclusion is consistent with Palestinian Government efforts, establishing the Palestinian Territory Authority in 2002 and the Palestinian LWSC in 2016.

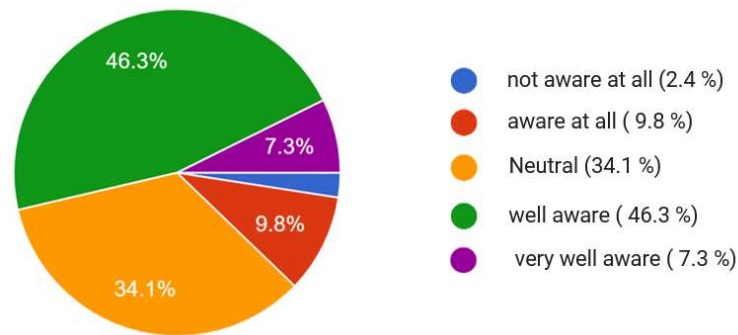


Figure 6: Government's awareness of the importance of the land issue in sustainable development.

According to the respondents, the mandates of the different public institutions handling land issues are not very clear. Only 14.6 per cent of respondents selected the “Clear/well defined/manageable” option, and more than 31 per cent of them selected the “Not clear/well defined/manageable” option. It was clear that there is a gap between the “Institutions/organizations with land-related mandates” in Palestine, where more than 41 per cent of respondents gave a negative perception about the linkages among the institutions, as shown in Figure 7.

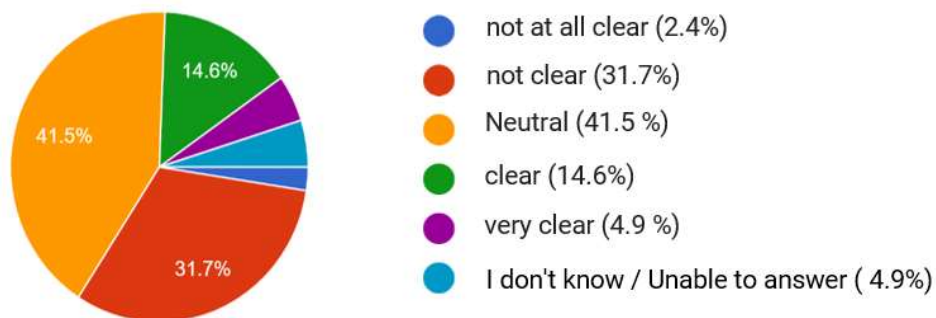


Figure 7: Mandates of the different public institutions with land-related functions.

Regarding whether linkages between institutions/organizations with land-related mandates are well defined to ensure good institutional cooperation, more than 41 per cent of respondents selected option “Bad institutional cooperation”, as shown in Figure 8. It can be concluded that the linkages between institutions or organizations with land-related mandates are not structured and are not clear.

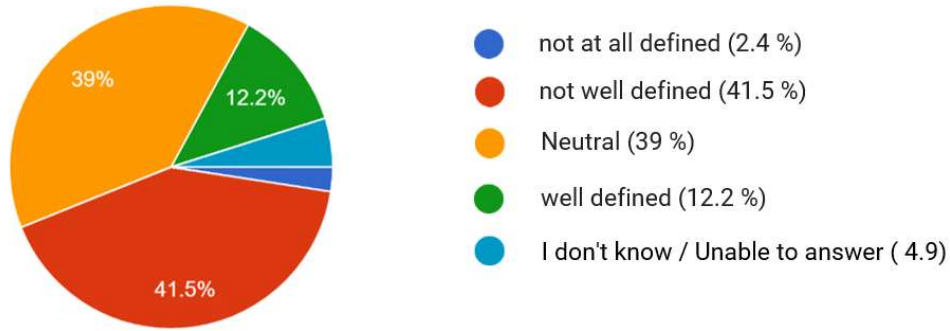


Figure 8: Linkages between institutions/organizations with land-related mandates.

Regarding the management of Palestinian institutions related to land issues, more than 53 per cent of respondents selected the option “Not well managed”, and about 9.8 per cent selected the “Not well managed at all” option. We can note a gap in the management frame in the land organizations in Palestine at the national level from the respondents’ perspective, as shown in Figure 9.

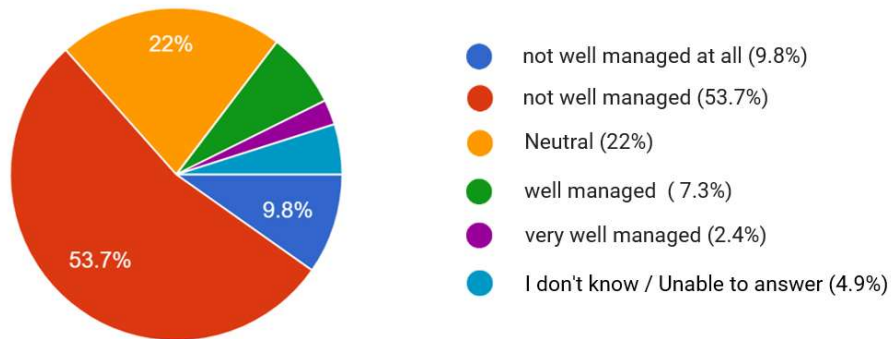


Figure 9: Management of Palestinian institutions related to land issues.

The Palestinian land organizations face financial challenges. More than 36 per cent of respondents selected the option “Not well-financed”, and about 22 per cent of respondents selected the option “Not well-financed at all” for their institutions. As such, it can be concluded that the Palestinian land organizations are not well-financed, especially by the government, as shown in Figure 10.

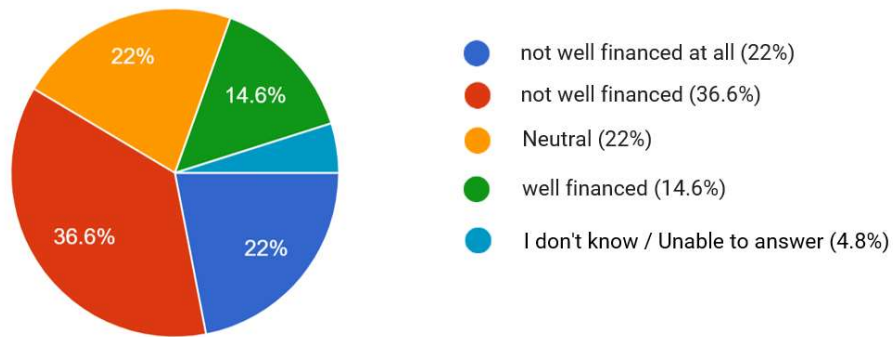


Figure 10: Palestinian land organizations and the financial challenges.

With regard to competent personnel in the Palestinian land organizations, it was clear that a gap exists. More than 51 per cent of respondents selected the “Not well staffed” option, and about 7.3 per cent of respondents selected the option “Not well staffed at all”, as shown in Figure 11. Therefore, we can conclude that employees in the field of land administration need capacity-building programmes.

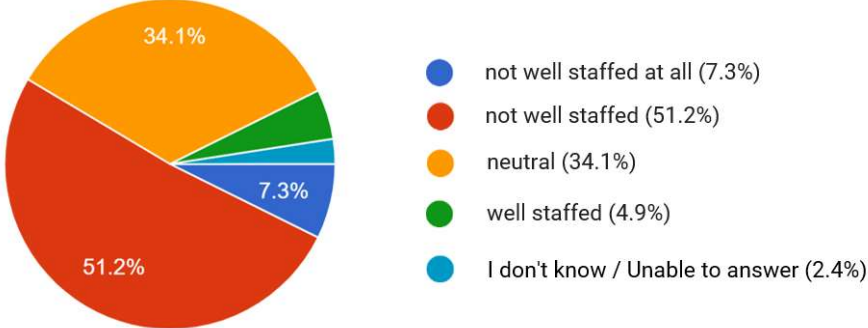


Figure 11: Competent personnel in the Palestinian land organizations.

5.1. Main Gaps between Political Objectives and Institutional Infrastructure

- The Palestinian Government has an interest in land issues despite the political and geopolitical challenges. Nevertheless, this study recommends raising the level of government interest through the development of regulations, laws, policies, and practices, especially for sustainable development and the achievement of the global goals of SDGs and the New Urban Agenda in Palestine.
- The roles and mandates of the different land organizations are not very clear and not well defined. Palestinian land management systems and institutions need to properly develop their roles and mandates based on legal and institutional references.
- The linkages among the Palestinian land institutions are not well defined and are insufficient. The cooperation links need to develop within the clear Palestinian institutional framework.
- The management of Palestinian institutions related to land issues is inefficient, hence the need to develop the management aspect of the Palestinian land organizations.
- Palestinian land institution staff lack high-efficiency skills in land management issues. Educational and training modules and capacity-building need to develop in these institutions, as well as in the land Palestinian management system as a whole, including all the land management stakeholders.
- The Palestinian land institutions, especially the government sector, lack the financial support to develop their land management process and performance.

5.2. Land Tenure

About 75 per cent of respondents expressed a lack of knowledge about the percentage of the Palestinian population with the right to secure land tenure and official documentation. Only 24.4 per cent of respondents acknowledge the availability of this information, as shown in Figure 12. We can conclude that land administration stakeholders in Palestine lack knowledge on the total adult population that has secure tenure rights to land with legally recognized documentation.

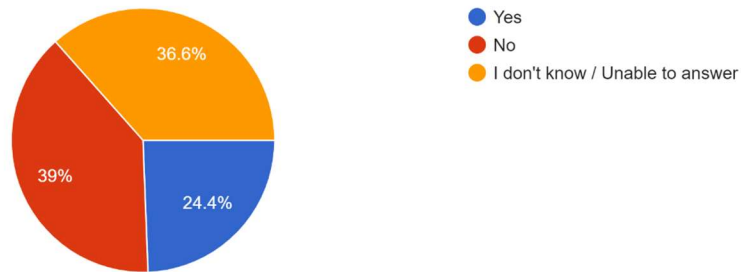


Figure 12: Adult population with secure tenure rights to land with legally recognized documentation.

Regarding sex-disaggregated information relating to the Palestinian adult population with secure tenure rights to land and legally recognized documentation, 63.4 per cent of respondents stated, “I don’t know”, 22 per cent stated “No”, and 14.6 per cent stated “Yes”, as shown in Figure 13.

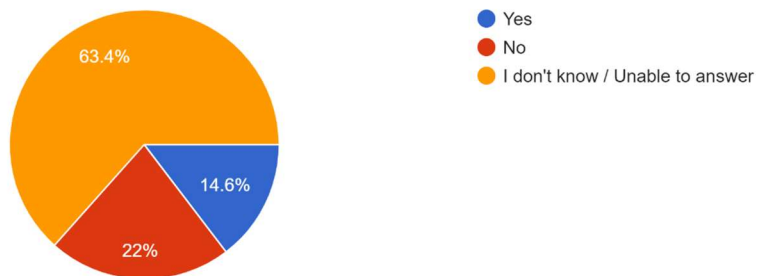


Figure 13: Awareness about gender and tenure rights.

More than 78 per cent of respondents stated “I don’t know” about the proportion of the Palestinian female adult population with secure tenure rights to land with legally recognized documentation, as shown in Figure 14.

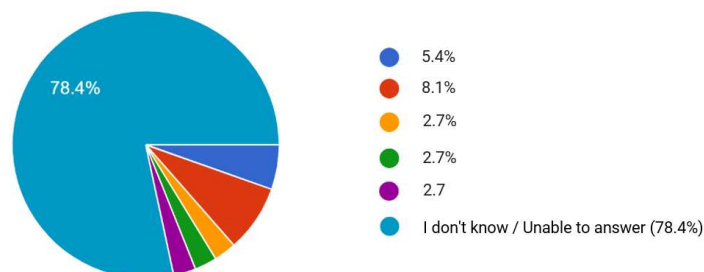


Figure 14: Proportion of the Palestinian female adult population with secure tenure rights to land.

As shown in Figure 15, about 73.3 per cent of respondents stated, “I don’t know”, expressing their lack of knowledge about the total adult population perceiving their rights as secure. Additionally, 7.3 per cent of respondents stated, “Less than 20 per cent”, and 9.8 per cent stated, “Between 61 and 80 per cent”.

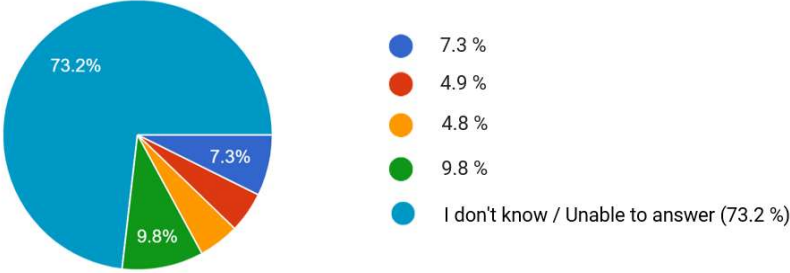


Figure 15: Proportion of the total adult population perceiving their rights as secure.

Regarding whether this information is available, more than 48 per cent of respondents stated, “I don’t know,” 34.1 per cent of them stated “No”, and 17.1 per cent picked “Yes”, as shown in Figure 16.

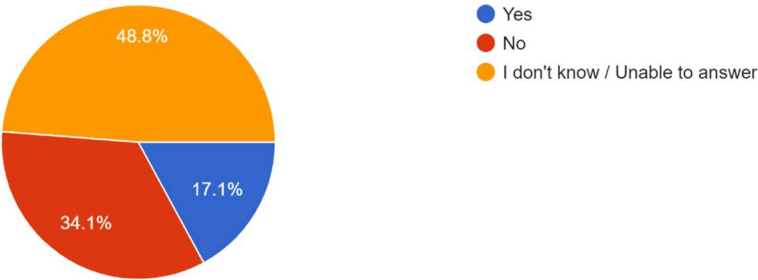


Figure 16: The availability of information about the adult population perceiving their rights as secure.

Regarding sex-disaggregated information about the proportion of the female adult population perceiving their rights as secure, more than 58 per cent of respondents stated, “I don’t know”, and 29.3 per cent selected “No available information”. Only 12.2 per cent said “Yes”, confirming that information is available. We can conclude that information about the proportion of the female adult population perceiving their rights as secure is not well known among the Palestinian land administration stakeholders, as shown in Figure 17.

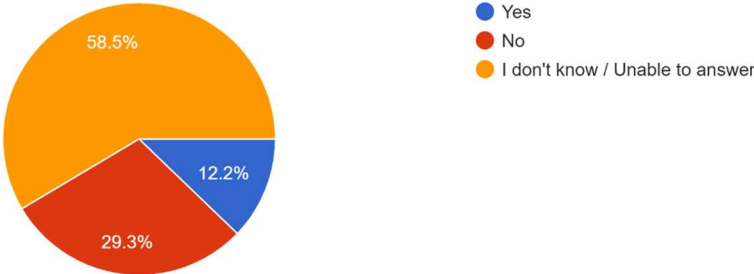


Figure 17: Share of the female adult population perceiving their rights as secure.

Concerning the possibility of forceful eviction and displacement in Palestine, more than 73 per cent of respondents stated “Likely”, and about 17.1 per cent identified the “Very likely” option, as shown in Figure 18.



Figure 18: Possibility of people being forcibly evicted and displaced from their lands in Palestine.

Based on content analysis, the respondents identified the main cause of forced evictions and displacements in Palestine as the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and their control of the lands and natural resources to establish the Israeli outputs in the Palestinian territories. The Israeli practices on the ground produced many of the land occupation forms, such as Israeli settlements, bypass roads, military campuses and the separation wall in the West Bank. Another cause is the Israeli occupation and its tools (confiscation of unregistered lands). A case example of confiscation of lands (security) is the colony of Kiryat Arbaa in Hebron City, used as housing for soldiers, which then turned into a colony. Furthermore, due to the military conflicts and wars such as the wars of 1948 and 1967, as well as the popular uprisings and the Palestinian groups’ conflicts, many of the Palestinians left their lands, especially in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In Jerusalem, the Israeli policies pushed many of the Palestinians to leave their homes and lands in the city and move to the West Bank.

There is a high incidence of displacement of Palestinians from their lands due to successive wars: the 1948 war, the 1967 war, the popular uprisings in 1987, the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000, the Gaza war in 2014, and up to today to the 2021 war in Gaza. Moreover, Israeli policies and practices contribute greatly to the displacement of Palestinians from their lands, especially in Area C and East Jerusalem City. For example, the Israeli administration aims to expel more than 27 Palestinian families from their homes in the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in Jerusalem. Furthermore, internal Palestinian conflicts (partisan or family) result in the displacement of many Palestinian families from their lands and properties. During the research period for this report, the Israeli army waged an operation in the Gaza Strip for 11 days. Palestinian houses were destroyed, as shown in Figure 19, and more than 50,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced (Ma’am Agency, 2021).

There are social reasons that push some Palestinians to leave their lands, such as family problems and the displacement of individuals and groups from one region to another based on the decisions of the tribal courts.

According to the respondents, urban land and properties were not affordable to purchase. More than 48 per cent of respondents selected the “Unaffordable” option and about 22 per cent selected the option “Extremely Unaffordable”. Only 12.2 per cent agreed that purchasing urban land and properties was

affordable. Therefore, we can conclude that owning urban land and properties in Palestinian cities is not easy from the respondents' point of view, as shown in Figure 20.

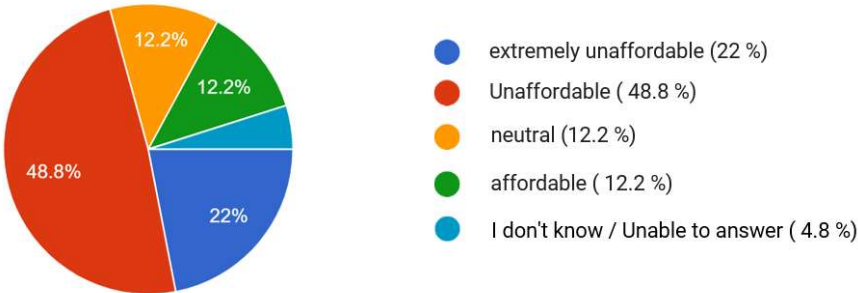


Figure 19: Affordability of purchasing urban land and properties.



Figure 20: Destroyed Palestinian houses during the Gaza war 2021. Source: Ma'am Agency (2021).

Regarding the cost of purchasing rural/agricultural land and whether it is affordable for the average citizen, about 36.6 per cent of respondents selected the “not affordable” option and 4.9 per cent

selected the “extremely unaffordable” option, as shown in Figure 21. Therefore, we can conclude that owning land and properties in Palestinian rural areas is easier and more affordable than the urban areas.

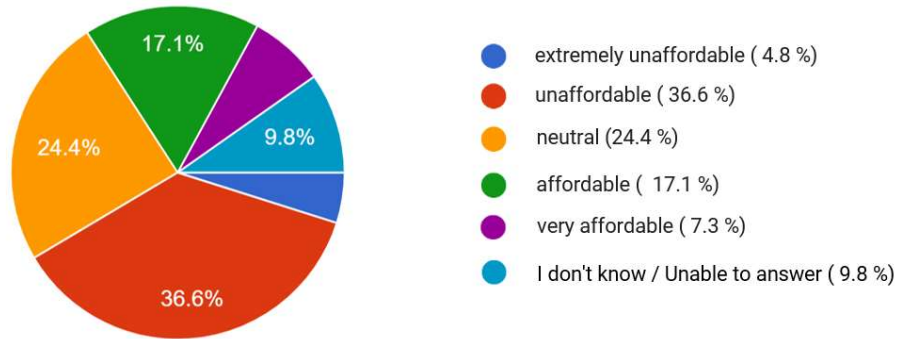


Figure 21: Affordability of purchasing rural land and properties.

Regarding the estimated months it took to purchase the respondents’ houses, the respondents gave a range between 30 and 80 months based on their average income, as shown in Figure 22.

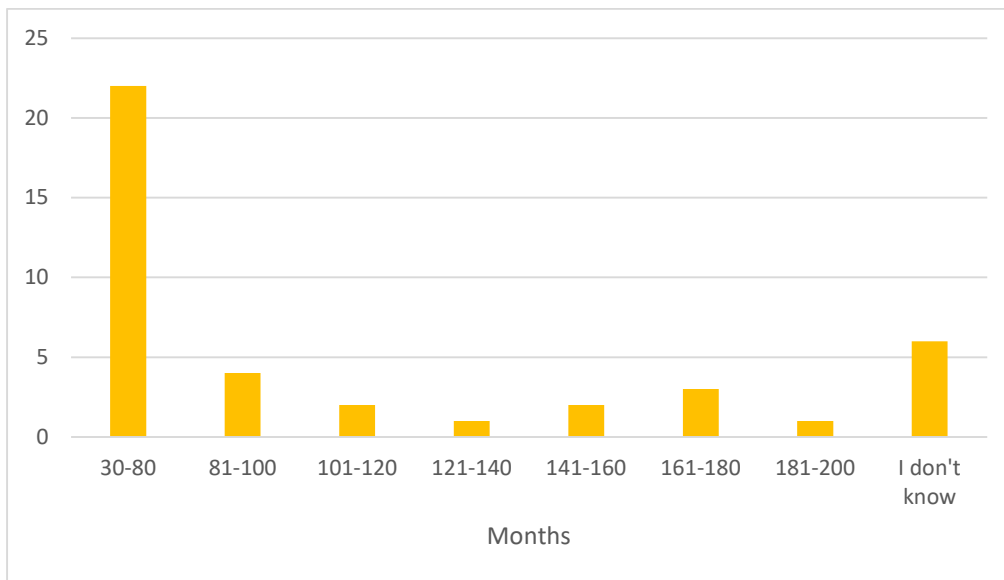


Figure 22: Estimated months it took to purchase the respondent’s home.

Regarding the understanding of the common citizens on how to access land rights and the related processes, about 36.6 per cent of respondents selected the option “Citizens do not understand well,” and 4.9 per cent selected the option “Do not understand well at all” and only 2.4 per cent of respondents selected the option “Understand well”, as shown in Figure 23. We can conclude that there is a lack of understanding how to access land rights and the related processes among the Palestinians based on the respondents’ viewpoints.

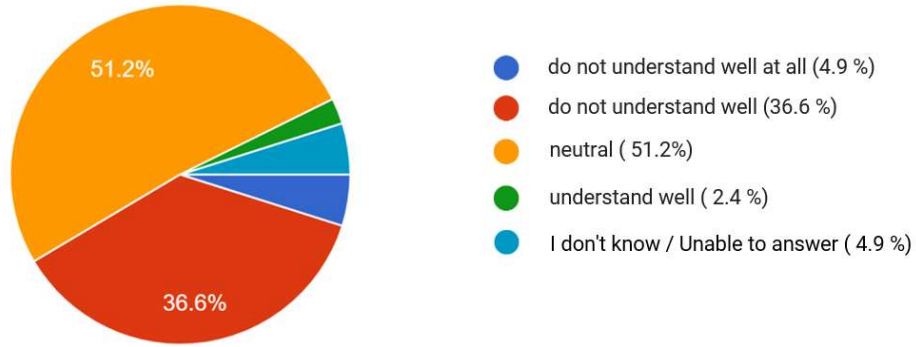


Figure 23: Understanding of the common citizens on how to access land rights.

Regarding ease of access for citizens to obtain funds to purchase land or properties, more than 26 per cent of respondents selected the “Difficult” option, about 7.3 per cent selected the “Very difficult” option, 36 per cent selected the “Not easy and not difficult” option and about 24.4 per cent selected the “Easy” option as shown in Figure 24. We can conclude that obtaining funds to purchase land or properties in Palestine is possible and there are some opportunities through the banks and community funding organizations, but it is not easy for all.

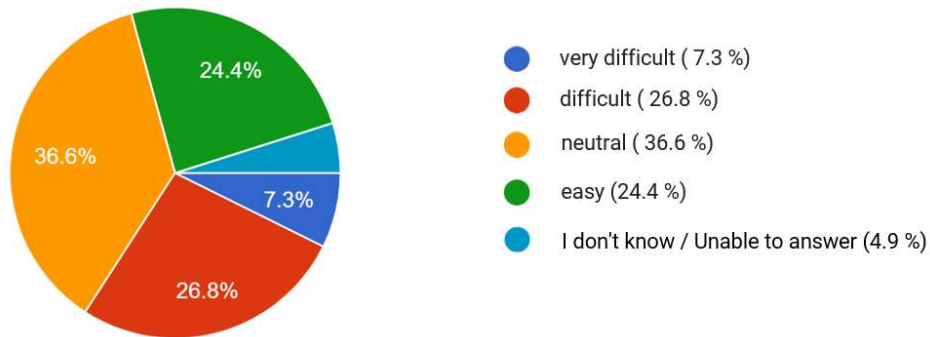


Figure 24: Ease of access for citizens to obtain funds to purchase land or properties.

Regarding the ease of obtaining funds to purchase land or properties with respect to men and women, more than 48 per cent of respondents selected the “It is a little easier for men” option, about 7.3 per cent selected “It is much easier for men”, and 39 per cent selected “It is the same for men and women”, as shown in Figure 25.



Figure 25: Ease with which men and women can access financing to purchase land or properties.

Regarding the ease of using personal land or property as collateral for obtaining loans, about 39 per cent of respondents selected “Easy” as an option, and 36 per cent selected the “Not easy and not difficult” option, as shown in Figure 26. In general, we can conclude that it is not difficult for the common citizens to use their land or property as collateral for obtaining loans in Palestine.

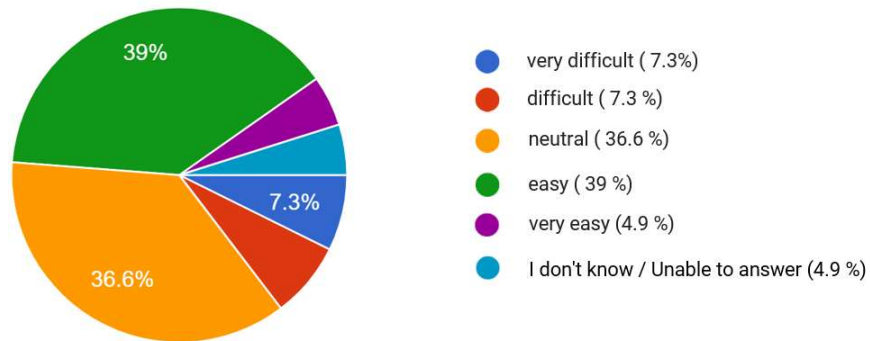


Figure 26: Ease for common citizens to use their land or property as collateral for obtaining loans.

Only 7.3 per cent of respondents selected the “Very difficult” option. When comparing the ease of the common citizens using their land or property as collateral for obtaining loans between men and women, more than 51 per cent of respondents selected the option “It is the same for men and women”, and 36 per cent selected “It is a little easier for men”, as shown in Figure 27.

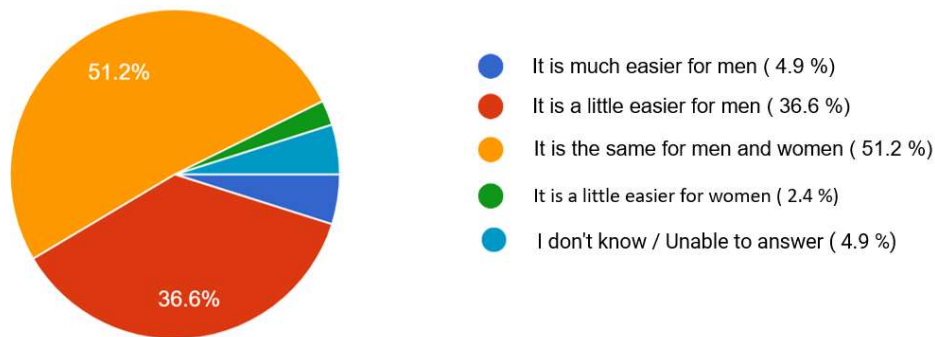


Figure 27: Ease with which men and women can use their land or property as collateral.

The cadastral system

There is a cadastral system in Palestine, but it is not completed yet. The percentage of coverage of the cadastral system for the Palestinian territories is not well known among the Palestinian land administration stakeholders. However, according to the respondents, the cadastral system covers between 35 and 45 per cent of the Palestinian lands.

The cadastral system in Palestine is incomplete due to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian lands since 1967 and the cessation of the land registration process in the West Bank by the Jordanian Authorities after the 1967 war. The PNA established the Palestinian Land Authority in 2002 to complete the land registration process. Unfortunately, the land registration process did not achieve the targets. For this reason, PNA established the LWSC in 2016 to complete the land registration process in Palestine. Despite the political and geopolitical obstacles, such as in Areas A, B and C, the process is still ongoing.

Regarding procedures for establishing new properties, more than 41 per cent of respondents stated that the procedures are “Not easy and not difficult”, and about 24 per cent selected the option “Difficult”. For the procedure to transfer property or use from one party to another, more than 48 per cent of respondents selected the “Easy” option and only 22 per cent selected the option “Difficult”, as shown in Figure 28.

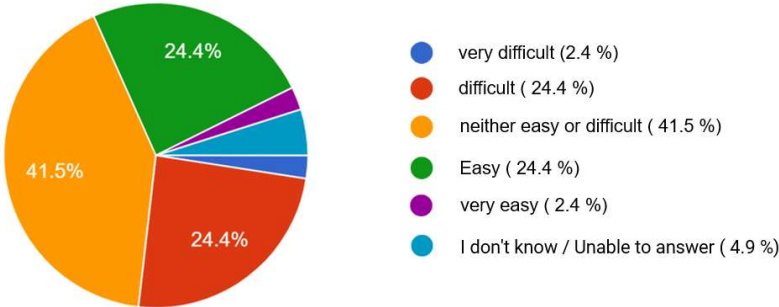


Figure 28: Procedures for establishing new properties.

Concerning the expense of creating new properties or altering existing properties, more than 31 per cent of respondents selected the option “Fair”, 17 per cent selected “Reasonably priced”, and 34 per cent selected “Expensive”, as shown in Figure 29.

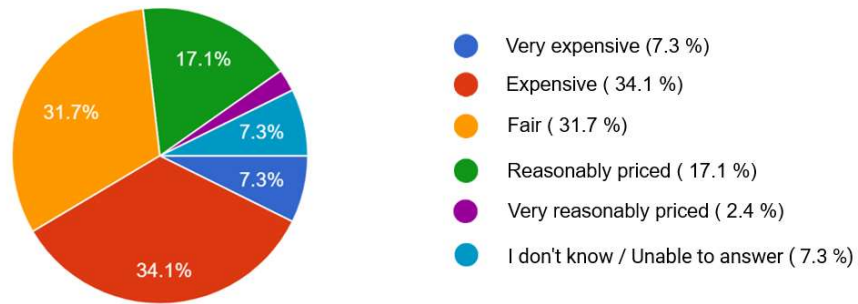


Figure 29: Expense of creating new properties or altering existing properties.

Based on the PLA sources, it takes between 5 and 15 days to record or make a change in a cadastral record in Palestine, and this process costs a fee of about 700 to 1,000 new Israeli shekels (NIS) with an addition of between 2.5 and 3 per cent of the land value in the West Bank and between 1 and 1.5 per cent of the land value in the Gaza Strip. According to the PLA, there are about 17 cadastral offices in the Palestinian governorates, with an average of 10 staff in each office. More than 50 per cent of respondents stated that the cadastral system in Palestine is centralized.

The main information in the cadastral process includes the cadastral maps and the boundaries maps such as basins boundaries maps, land-use maps, ownership maps and field surveys. However, regarding whether the cadastral information is linked with other spatial data such as the national spatial plan, master land-use plans and urban development plans, more than 41 per cent of respondents selected the option “No”, 29.3 per cent selected the “Yes”, and 29.3 per cent selected “I don’t know,” as shown in Figure 30.

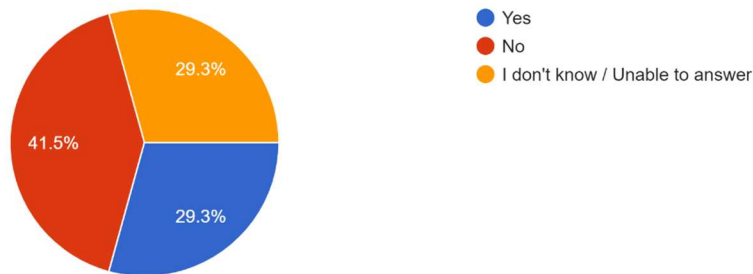


Figure 30: Cadastral information linkage with other spatial data.

Regarding the linkage between the cadastral information and decision-making processes, more than 53 per cent of respondents selected the option “Yes”, 22 per cent selected the option “No”, and more than 24 per cent selected the option “I don’t know/Unable to answer”, as shown in Figure 31. This indicates that decision makers can access the cadastral information in different ways for use in planning and development projects.

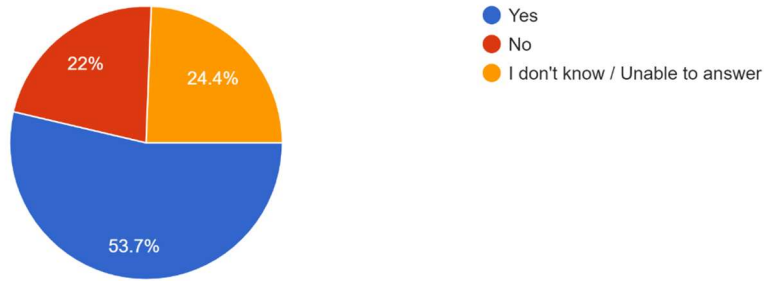


Figure 31: Linkage between the cadastral information and decision-making processes.

5.3. Land Value

More than 58 per cent of the sampled respondents stated that an institutionalized methodology exists to assess the value of land in Palestine, as shown in Figure 32.

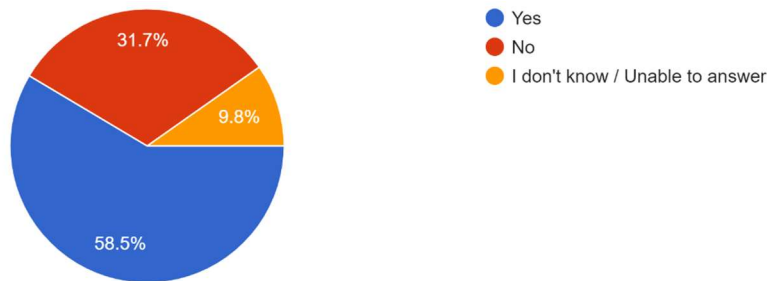


Figure 282: Existence of institutionalized methodology to assess the value of land.

Regarding the existence of adequate property valuation systems, about 41.5 per cent of respondents selected “Inadequate”, and more than 19 per cent selected the option “Very inadequate”, as shown in Figure 33. The property valuation systems did not cover all of the land tenure kinds where there are different land valuation systems with different approaches and objectives. For example, the Ministry of Finance has a land and property valuation system only in the cities for taxation.

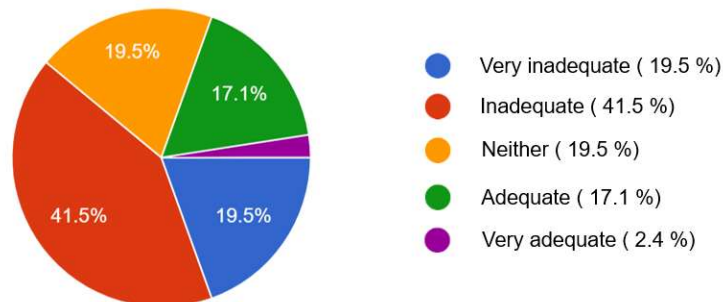


Figure 33: Adequacy of the property valuation systems.

Regarding institutionalized methodology for assessing the value of buildings in Palestine, more than 58 per cent of respondents stated that there is an institutionalized methodology, 22 per cent said “No”,

and more than 19 per cent did not know or were unable to give an answer, as shown in Figure 34. We can conclude that there is an institutionalized methodology for assessing the value of buildings in Palestine. However, most respondents stated that the building valuation systems do not cover all tenure types and that the valuation system is used only for taxation and does not give a true indicator for the building and land prices in the market.

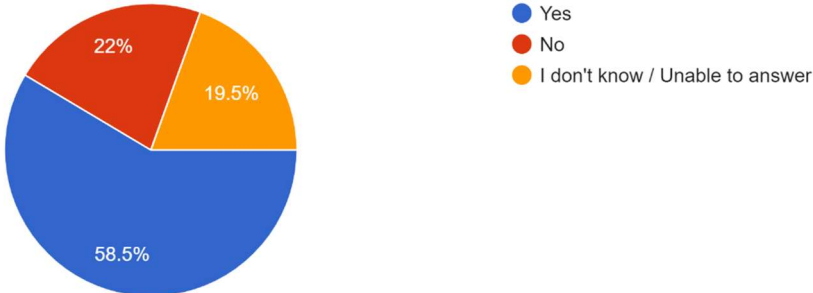


Figure 34: Institutionalized methodology for assessing the value of buildings.

More than 75 per cent of the sample respondents stated that there are professional land valuers in Palestine, with 60 per cent agreeing that the professional land valuers are registered and trained. However, more than 37 per cent of respondents stated that these professionals were inaccessible. There is guesswork, which is random, unorganized and at the discretion of the non-expert appraisers rather than an approved valuation system. The interest in the appraisal process is more in the field of banking and mortgage real estate than the Land Authority. According to Law No. 40 of the year 1952, all land settlement work should include land valuation for the registered land plots. According to LWSC, the average land valuation estimation was USD 23,683 per dunam in the West Bank, as shown in Table 2.

| Geopolitical classification | Sample size (in dunams) | Average price per dunam (USD) |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Area A | 71,046 | 44,150 |
| Area B | 108,943 | 25,563 |
| Area C | 150,817 | 12,684 |
| Total | 330,806 | 82,397 |

Table 2: Land valuation estimations.
Source: LWSC (2020).

Regarding the land and property taxation system, more than 82 per cent of respondents stated that there is a land and property taxation system in Palestine, as shown in Figure 35; more than 80 per cent stated that the system is only applied in the cities, while 46.3 per cent stated that the system applied in the rural areas. Only 5 per cent regarded the land and property tax system as “Fair”. Most respondents stated that the system covered less than 60 per cent of the Palestinian lands.

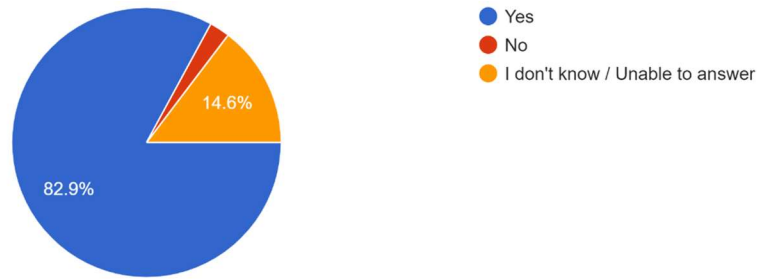


Figure 35: Land and property taxation system.

Regarding the percentage of land/property revenues collected in comparison with the total expected amount, more than 53 per cent of respondents do not know about this issue and about 17.1 per cent stated less than 20 per cent.

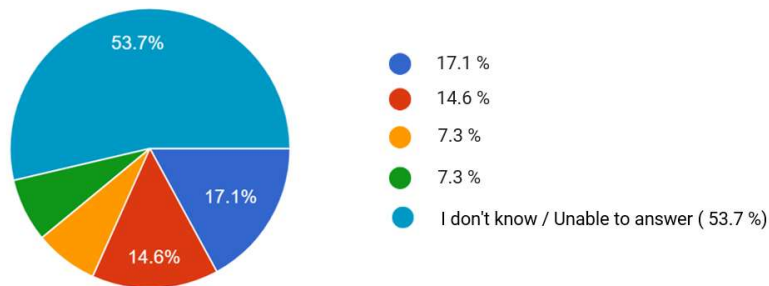


Figure 29: Land and property revenues.

On the other hand, more than 53 per cent of respondents have no knowledge about municipal expenditures paid through income from land and property taxes, as shown in Figure 37. Most respondents stated that the percentage of property tax collection is very low, and it is levied centrally before it is returned to local authorities in an irregular and opaque way.

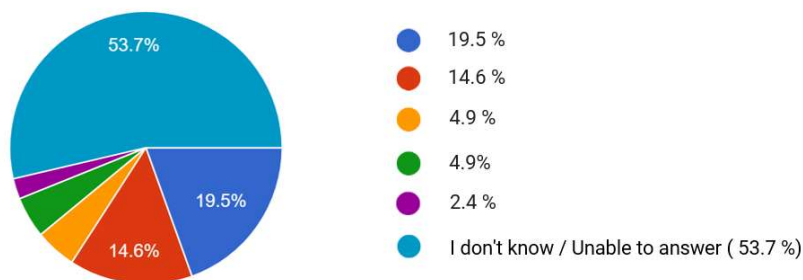


Figure 30: Municipal expenditures paid through income from land and property taxes.

Regarding the impact of taxation on the use of land and land markets as considered by decision makers, about 39 per cent of respondents selected the "I don't know" option, and 12.2 per cent selected the

“Not at all” option. We can conclude that the impact of taxation on the use of land and land markets, as considered by decision makers, is not well known among Palestinian land administration stakeholders.

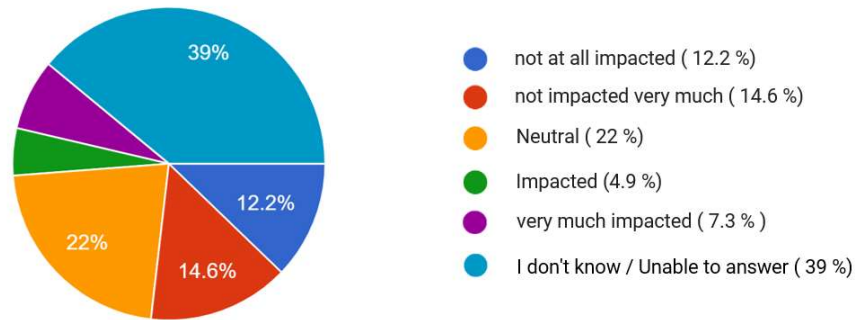


Figure 3831: Taxation on the use of land and land markets as considered by decision makers.

Based on the respondents’ feedback, there is no complete and accessible/digital land information system recording land value in Palestine.

5.4. Land Use

The control and enforcement of land-use decisions in Palestine are very difficult due to the Israeli occupation and the geopolitical classification in the West Bank (Areas A, B and C), where the Israel army control more than 60 per cent of the total area in the West Bank (Area C). This situation makes managing and planning for land use in Palestine difficult. Despite the difficult political and geopolitical situation, more than 43 per cent of respondents are aware of land-use plans at the national level, as shown in Figure 39. The national spatial plan prepared in 2015 by the Palestine State vision 2025–2050 aims to link the spatial dimension and the development issues in Palestine with a focus on the protection of the natural and agricultural areas. Only 14 per cent of respondents consider the plans “adequate”. Most respondents stated that it is very difficult to enforce these plans. The Palestinian Government is putting a lot of effort into implementing development projects based on these plans in the West Bank, especially in Area C.

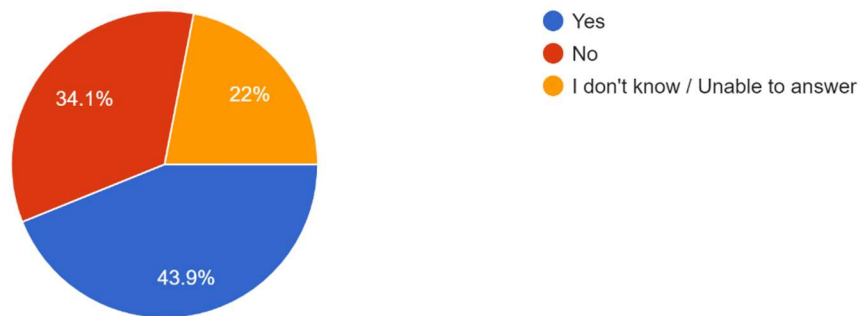


Figure 39: Adequate and updated land-use plans at national level.

At the regional level, the situation is similar to the national level because many of the regional lands are located in Area C, as shown in Figure 40. More than 46 per cent of respondents stated that there are regional land-use plans, with about 34 per cent stating that the plans are not adequate. About 38 per cent of respondents stated that it is not easy to enforce the plans.

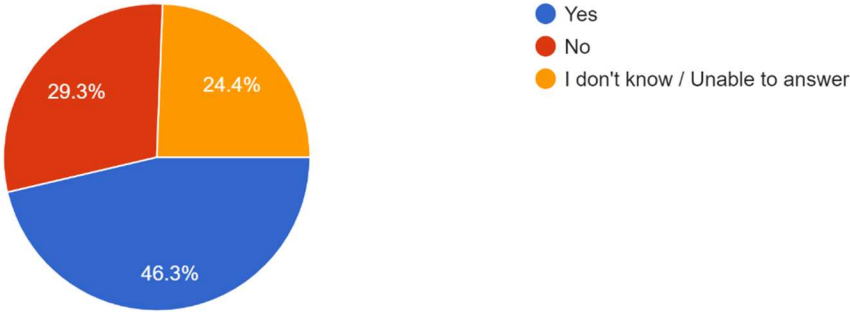


Figure 40: Adequate and updated land-use plans at regional level.

At the local level, more than 80 per cent of respondents stated that there are local land-use plans (master plans), as shown in Figure 41, because most local planning is used in the Palestinian localities and city’s borders, and most of these areas are located in Areas A and B, under full or partial Palestinian administrative control. However, only 23 per cent of respondents stated that these plans are adequate, and about 30 per cent of them stated that the plans are correctly enforced. Generally, these plans can be applied in cities and urban areas more than in rural areas.

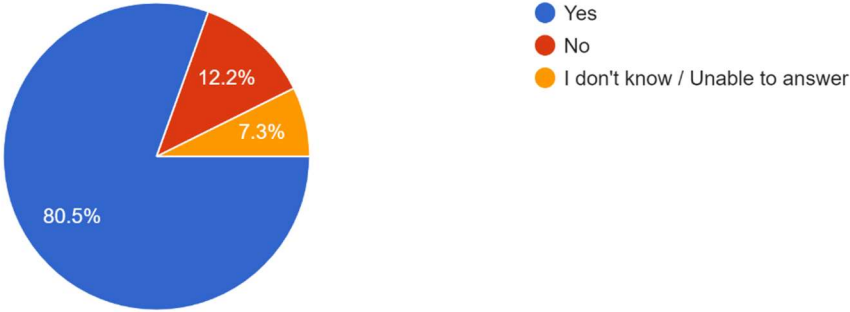


Figure 41: Adequate and updated land-use plans at local level.

Regarding adequate and updated urban plans for the main and fast-growing urban centres in Palestine, more than 53 per cent of respondents stated that there are such plans, especially in the big cities. However, for the informal settlements, more than 43 per cent of respondents stated that there are no land-use plans because, in general, there are no informal urban areas except the refugee camps located in areas bordering urban areas such as Jerusalem and those established in Gaza as a result of the 2014 war.

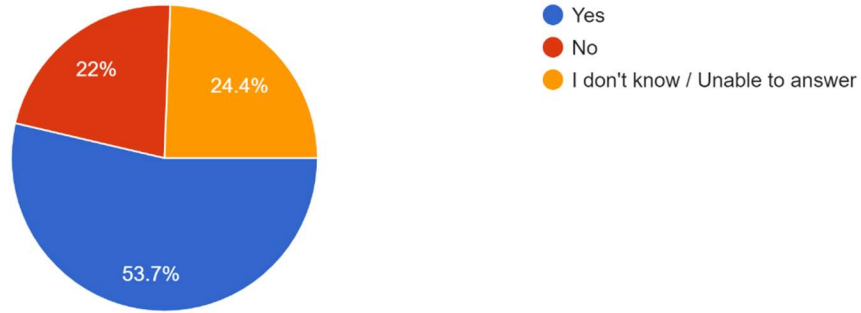


Figure 42: Adequate and updated urban plans for the main and fast-growing urban centres.

Regarding adequate building permit regulations, more than 73 per cent of respondents stated that there are regulations, as shown in Figure 43, with 45 per cent finding them adequate and 34 per cent sharing that they are applied correctly. In general, the monitoring of these regulations in the cities is better than in rural areas.

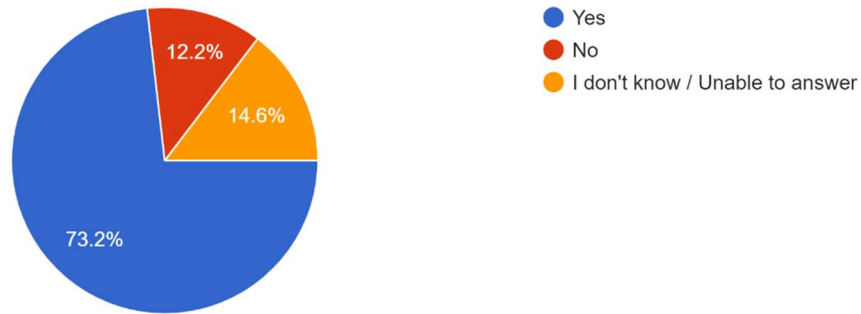


Figure 43: Adequate building permit regulations.

Regarding adequate environmental protection land-use regulations, more than 41 per cent of respondents stated that there are such regulations in Palestine, as shown in Figure 44, with about 34 per cent stating that they are not adequate and not enforced very well.

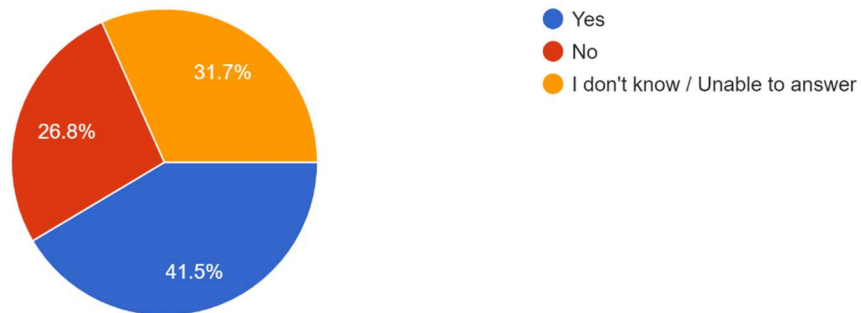


Figure 44: Adequate environmental protection under land-use regulations.

Regarding whether the government might interfere in private land rights, more than 40 per cent of respondents (12.2 per cent very unclear and 29.3 per cent unclear) stated that the procedures applied by the government are neither clear nor suitable, as shown in Figure 45.

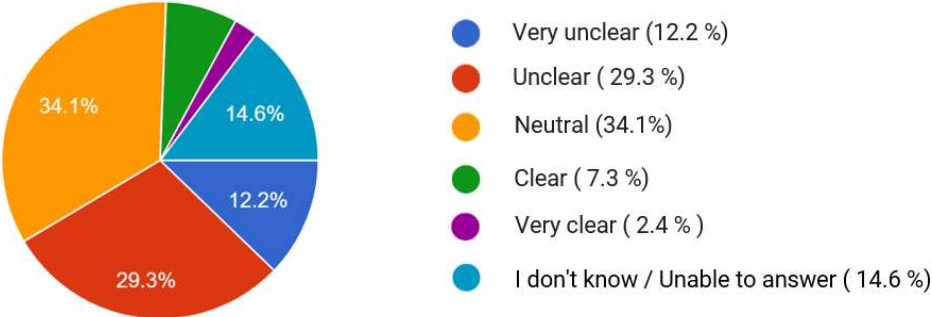


Figure 45: Government interference in private land rights.

Regarding whether there are enough opportunities for the government to acquire private land for public development purposes, only 12 per cent of respondents stated that there are enough opportunities, as shown in Figure 46. This is because the Palestinian Government lacks the financial resources to compensate landowners for implementing the acquisition procedures. Additionally, if the government acquires private land for public development purposes and does not use it for a period of 7 years, it reverts to the owners. Moreover, the geopolitical status in Palestine prevents the Palestinian Government from conducting the acquisition procedures in many cases.



Figure 46: Opportunities for the government to acquire private land for public development.

Regarding the existence of a complete and accessible/digital land information system recording land use in Palestine, more than 56 per cent of respondents stated that there is no digital land information system, as shown in Figure 47. Such systems exist in some government organizations but do not cover more than 40 per cent of Palestinian lands. About 43 per cent of respondents stated that these digital information systems are incomplete and unavailable.

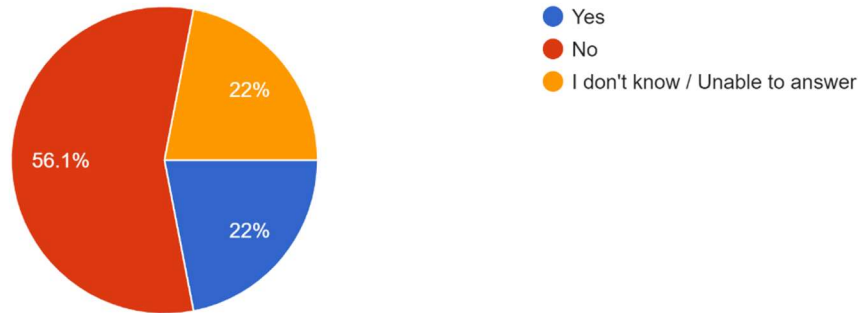


Figure 47: Existence of a complete and accessible digital land information system for land use.

Regarding the existence of complete and accessible digital land information systems recording natural resources in Palestine, more than 43 per cent of respondents stated that there are no systems for recording natural resources, as shown in Figure 48. If such systems exist in some organizations, they are not accessible to all.

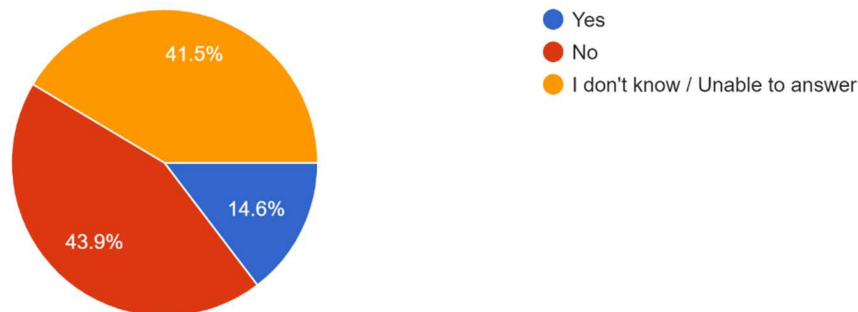


Figure 48: Existence of a complete and accessible digital land information system for natural resources.

5.5. Land Development

48.8 per cent of respondents confirmed the existence of mechanisms for the public to acquire land for public use.

Regarding the existence of efficient regulations to control land subdivisions/consolidation in urban areas, more than 41 per cent of respondents stated that such regulations exist in Palestine, with about 17 per cent stating that the regulations are fair, and 10 per cent stating that regulations are correctly used in the urban areas.

Regarding efficient regulations to control land subdivisions/consolidation in rural areas, more than 36 per cent of respondents stated that such regulations exist, with about 19 per cent of them stating that the regulations are neither fair nor cost-effective and only 12 per cent stating that the regulations are used correctly. The efficient regulations to control land subdivisions/consolidation are better applied in the Palestinian urban areas than in the rural areas due to the control of the Palestinian Government on the lands in Areas A and B.

Regarding adequate mechanisms/regulations to ensure construction is aligned with land-use regulations in Palestine, more than 75 per cent of respondents stated that there are such regulations, as shown in

Figure 49. Only 17 per cent of respondents stated that the regulations are cost-effective, while 19.4 per cent stated that the regulations are used correctly.

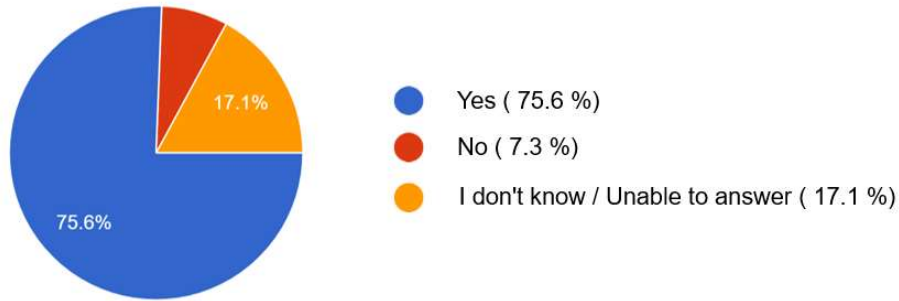


Figure 49: Adequate mechanisms/regulations to ensure construction is aligned with land-use regulations.

Regarding whether the property development process is easy for landowners, more than 56 per cent of respondents stated that the process is easy for landowners, as shown in Figure 50. About 38 per cent stated that the process is easy for professional developers, while 34 per cent stated that the process is easy for public authorities. In Palestine, the private sector plays a significant role in land and real estate development more than the public authorities do.

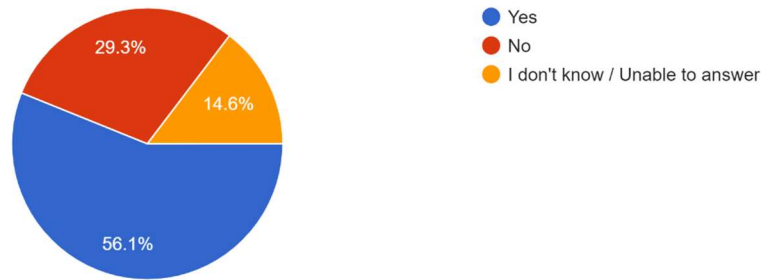


Figure 50: Property development process is easy for landowners.

Regarding effective mechanisms to change land use by granting planning permissions and building permits, more than 63 per cent of respondents stated that such mechanisms exist in Palestine, as shown in Figure 51, with 27 per cent stating that the mechanisms are cost-effective and 26 per cent that they are used in the correct way.

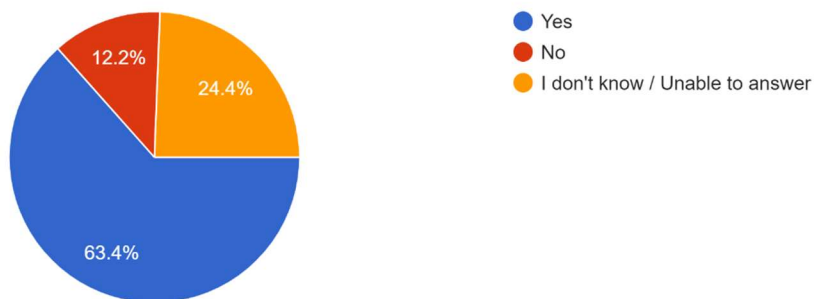


Figure 51: Mechanisms to change land use by granting planning permissions and building permits.

Regarding the distribution of development costs, more than 46 per cent of respondents stated that there are mechanisms to ensure that development costs are fairly distributed between the public and the private actors. About 7.3 per cent of respondents stated that the mechanisms are cost-effective for the public and private actors, while only 5 per cent indicated that the mechanisms are used appropriately.

5.6. Land Disputes Resolution

Regarding the formal system for resolving conflicts and disputes related to land rights and parcel boundaries in Palestine, respondents confirmed the presence of a formal judicial system for resolving conflicts related to land rights.

However, more than 44 per cent of respondents stated that the process in the formal judicial system takes long (some cases taking many years), see Figure 52. Only 15 per cent stated that the formal judicial system is affordable for the poor and vulnerable. Only 10 per cent stated that people are familiar with the procedures for accessing the formal dispute resolution system, while only 9.8 per cent of respondents stated that people trust the formal dispute resolution system. Most respondents stated that there are no differences between women and men in the formal judicial system. From the answers of respondents, it was not possible to define the share of land-related cases in the formal courts.

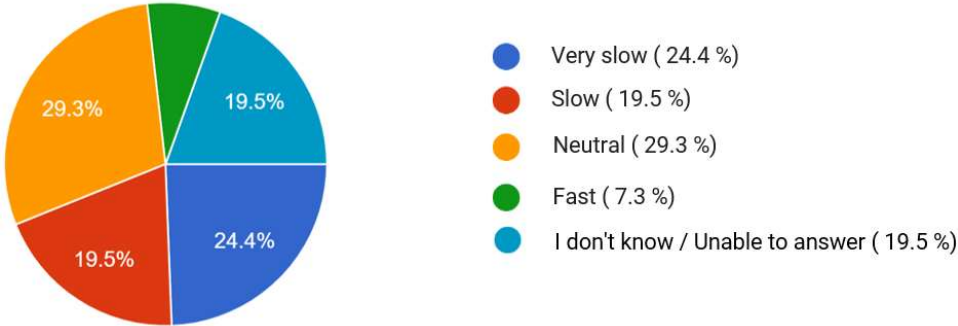


Figure 52: How fast the formal system resolves conflicts and disputes related to land rights.

Regarding the informal mechanisms of solving land rights disputes in Palestine, more than 73 per cent of respondents stated that there are informal mechanisms of solving land rights disputes, such as clan and societal mechanisms, and most of them have no information about the number of land rights disputes handled in the informal system. Most respondents stated that women face real problems and challenges in the informal system of solving land rights disputes, with the women not getting their rights in the land issues within the clan and societal mechanisms frame based on some of the cultural and social aspects in the society such as “No land for the stranger.” Additionally, when they demand their rights, women are asked, “Do you want money or men?” Thus, the informal mechanisms of solving land rights disputes are not fair to women in many cases, especially in inheritance issues. According to LWSC (2020), women’s landownership in the West Bank is 33 per cent (see Table 3).

| Governorate | Plots registered to men | Plots registered to women | Per cent registered to women |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Ramallah and al-Bireh | 138,962 | 81,178 | 37 |
| Salfit | 38,826 | 19,159 | 33 |
| Jerusalem | 11,757 | 5,057 | 30 |
| Nablus | 39,040 | 19,848 | 34 |
| Jenin | 18,912 | 10,424 | 36 |
| Hebron | 58,352 | 16,685 | 22 |
| Bethlehem | 38,075 | 11,400 | 23 |
| Tulkarem | 29,225 | 17,315 | 37 |
| Qalqilya | 12,913 | 7,164 | 36 |
| Tubas | 1,533 | 1,314 | 46 |
| Jericho | 2 | - | 0 |
| Total | 387,597 | 189,544 | 33 |

Table 3: Women’s landownership in the West Bank
Source: LWSC (2020).

6. ANALYSIS OF EXISTING LEARNING OFFERS AND RELATED CURRICULA FOR LAND GOVERNANCE

This section aims to map out existing educational and training institutions in Palestine with learning offers related to land governance in order to assess their strengths and needs. In addition, it will present some of the research aspects of land governance in Palestine. Lastly, this section will present the potential collaboration opportunities among the stakeholders in the land management system to enhance the land governance performance in Palestine, especially under the current political instability.

6.1. Existing Learning Offers on Land-Related Topics

This study aims to explore the existing educational and training institutions in Palestine with learning offers related to land governance by collecting the primary data from a purposive sample of 10 organizations from different categories related to land issues in Palestine, as shown in Figure 53.

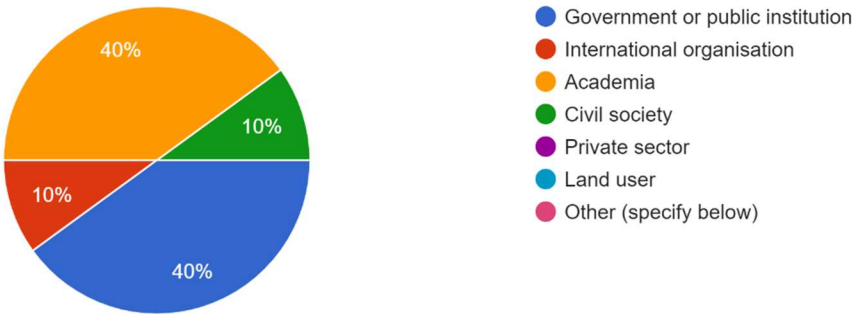


Figure 53: Type of respondent.

The purposive sample included four universities (Al-Najah, Al-Quds, Hebron and Palestine Polytechnic University). It also included four public organizations such as the MoLG, the Ministry of Finance, the PLA and the LWSC. From the international organization’s category, the sample included GIZ, and ARIJ represented the civil organizations, as shown in Figure 54.

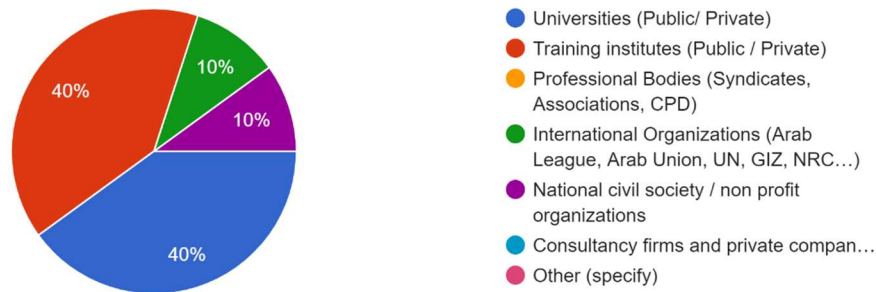


Figure 54: Organizations offering courses related to land governance.

The sample respondents’ specializations were GIS, geography, urban planning, geomatics and surveying, finance and management, as shown in Figure 55.

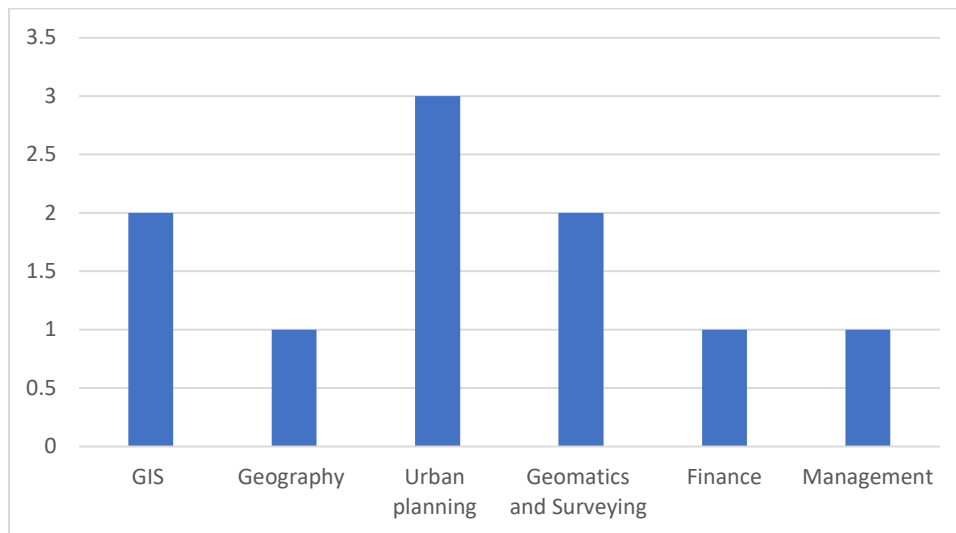


Figure 55: Respondent specializations.

Regarding the curriculum related to land management in Palestine, the educational modules included academic, training and orientation courses and programmes. According to the study sample, the type of course content focused on the fields of geospatial studies, survey and mapping (with 60 per cent of the land management courses such as geography, land use, GIS, surveying and mapping), while 40 per cent of the courses focused on spatial/land-use planning categories such as spatial planning, land-use planning and urban planning. Additionally, about 20 per cent of the courses focused on real estate/valuation/taxation, only 10 per cent of the courses focused on legal/justice aspects, and about 10

per cent of the courses focused on other fields such as urban and rural development and GIS for land-use planning, as shown in Figure 56.

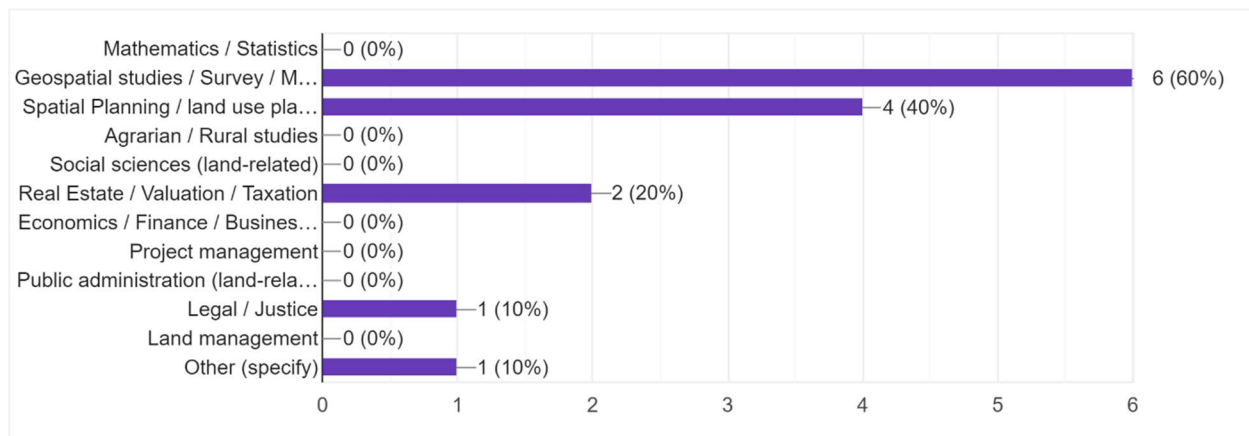


Figure 56: Type of course content.

The duration of academic courses in Palestinian universities is between 4 and 5 years in programmes such as civil engineering, geomatics, surveying and geography. For the professional and orientation courses, the range is from one to seven days. Regarding the type of courses, about 10 per cent were professional learning courses, about 40 per cent academic, and about 50 per cent project-specific courses related to land issues (most conducted in government organizations).

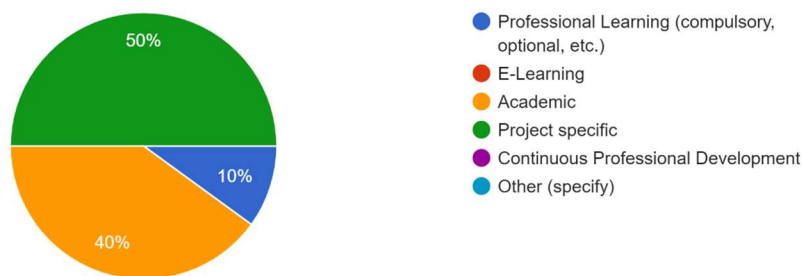


Figure 57: Type of courses.

Regarding the grade/level of the courses, about 50 per cent of the courses are conducted as short courses, 40 per cent are at the undergraduate level, and about 10 per cent of the courses are orientation workshops, as shown in Figure 58.

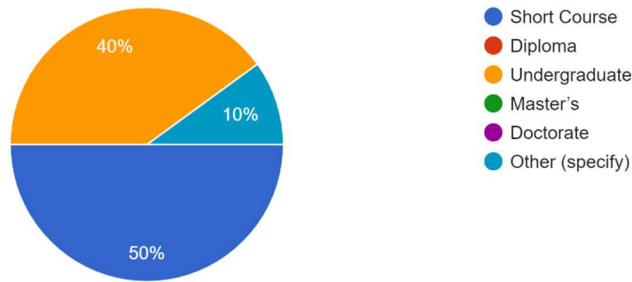


Figure 58: Grade/level of courses.

Regarding certification in courses related to land management issues, 40 per cent of the courses issued certificates, while 60 per cent did not issue certificates.

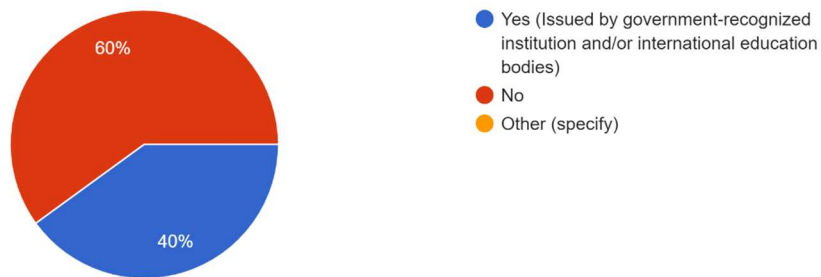


Figure 59: Certification.

Regarding the funding of the courses, about 30 per cent are funded by the government, about 50 per cent by the students as fees, and about 20 per cent by international organizations/institutions and donors.

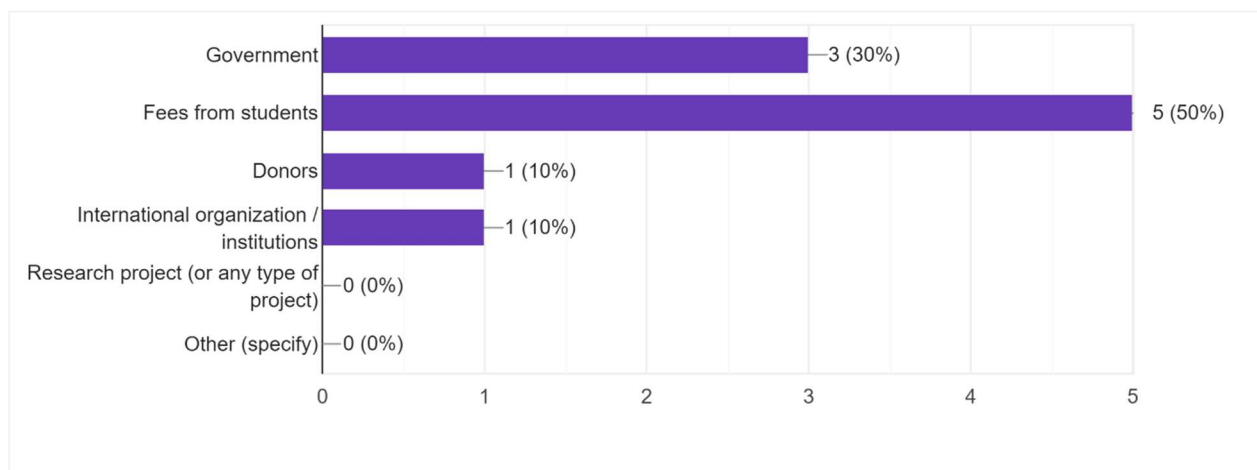


Figure 6032: Funding of courses.

6.2. Existing Research Efforts on Land-Related Topics

Regarding research efforts on land-related topics in Palestine, there are many research efforts conducted with various topics in the land management issues such as land tenure, land cover or land-use changes, land-use planning and development, urban land-use planning, land laws and smart urban growth. Most of the research efforts were conducted in the university through undergraduate and postgraduate theses in programmes such as geography, urban planning, geomatics, public land management, land tenure and land rights.

One example of such research efforts is a study about the Bedouin Rights under Occupation in the West Bank, which was conducted to explore their rights under the occupation, International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law. The Bedouin, in common with all Palestinians, enjoy primary protection from forced displacement and may enjoy supplementary rights and protections under the latter, including indigenous rights. All Palestinians, including the Bedouin, are at risk of violations of their rights under International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, especially forced displacement from their lands. There is a priority to develop new approaches to exploring additional avenues for the protection of groups with special needs, lifestyles or cultural practices at risk of degradation (including the Bedouin) (Amara and Nasasra, 2015).

Another study which focused on the public land in Palestine identified all land that is not private land or waqf (endowment) land as public land. The public land portfolio is a very important asset in achieving government objectives in many areas, including economic development projects, social housing provision and the conservation of natural and cultural heritage. However, the process of reforming and developing the land sector in Palestine is still in progress. There is a need to put more effort into identifying public lands and integrating them into the national, regional and local land-use planning to achieve the Palestinian government's goals to help contribute to building and developing the future Palestinian State (Salameh, 2008).

According to a study conducted by Arafat and his colleagues about the role of humanitarian organizations in the land administration, political instability and wars in the Gaza Strip led to the displacement of hundreds of families from their lands. These conditions have imposed a particular burden upon humanitarian organizations with regard to land and property issues. There is an urgent need for humanitarian organizations to foster transparency and accountability in land administration in the Gaza Strip and promote compliance with international standards and practices (Arafat et al., 2014). A further study focused on the important support for smallholders in Areas C and the Jordan Valley. This study concluded that small-scale agricultural development in the Jordan Valley relies on farming households achieving more secure land tenure and that rural development agencies should prioritise farming households that rent land and practise open field cropping systems within their projects and programmes (Caulfield et al., 2020).

Another study addressed the association between the urban sprawl and compact city policy under the social, environmental, and financial problems in Palestinian cities. This study found that domestic urban planning and urban development systems do not have adequate capacity to operate a comprehensive compact city policy. Therefore, the study recommended drawing detailed lessons on how to enable an urban planning and urban development system to implement a compact city policy successfully

(Anabtawi, 2018). Yet another study aimed to define the most suitable area that should be developed in the south-eastern Jerusalem Region living under political instability. The findings show that policymakers, urban planners, urban managers and people need to elevate their awareness of sustainable urban planning issues, especially during stages of political instability. Principles of smart urban growth will be useful ideas for promoting sustainability in the Palestinian urban environments (Raddad, 2016).

The scientific research groups in the universities with various interests in land issues conducted some of the research projects related to land management in Palestine under topics such as urban expansion, land-use changes under the political instability conditions and spatial planning. Additionally, there are individual research efforts from the researchers at the universities that conduct research for scientific publishing. The civil organizations and the research centres in Palestine contribute to the research. One example is the LRC which was founded in 1986 in Jerusalem as part of the Arab Studies Society, headed by the late Faisal Hussein, one of the Centre's interests was rights to land and Housing in Palestine. Another research centre related to land issues is ARIJ, founded in 1990 to promote sustainable development in the Occupied Palestinian Territory and the self-reliance of the Palestinian people through greater control over their natural resources. It represents several years of combined organizational experience in the fields of economic, social, natural resources management, water management, sustainable agriculture and political dynamics of development in the area.

6.3. Synthesis of Stakeholder Response on Potential Collaboration

There are some collaborative efforts between the land management stakeholders in Palestine. International organizations play a significant role in enhancing land management issues in Palestine, especially UN-Habitat and GLTN. UN-Habitat provided financial and technical support for several projects in Palestine, such as the Spatial Development Strategic Framework for Hebron, Ramallah and Al-Bireh, and Jerusalem Governorate that adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as the overarching framework to promote the process of sustainable spatial development. Moreover, UN-Habitat supported the LWSC in carrying out the land registration process in Palestine, especially in Area C. The GIZ had three priority areas of support, which are: sustainable economic development, vocational training and the labour market; Governance, democracy and civil society; and peacebuilding and resilience. Most of the collaborative efforts in the land issues are conducted between international organizations and the Palestinian Government. To capture the potential for collaboration among land management stakeholders, there is a need to develop a road map by

- Comprehensive mapping of the land management stakeholders in Palestine, including academia, international organizations, civil bodies, the government and the private sector;
- Comprehensive analysis of existing collaborative efforts between the stakeholders;
- Developing a strategic plan for enhancing the potential collaboration among the stakeholders based on the SDGs, NUA and Palestinian State Strategy.

A potential collaborative road map in the land management context should focus on three main aspects: academic, research and development projects. In Palestine, like in many Arab countries, there is a clear

gap between the academic and research bodies and the development projects in the community and the real world. Therefore, there is a need to reduce this gap by establishing a legal, clear, solid and collaborative frame in Palestinian land management with new policies, tools and processes, especially under political instability.

7. CONCLUSIONS

Palestine is a state under Israeli occupation, which controls most of the Palestinian lands, natural resources and borders. Therefore, the process of managing lands in Palestine is complex and difficult, making it an exceptional case at the global level. However, this reality does not prevent the Palestinians from thinking and working hard within the possibilities available to develop the land administration sector until they achieve the vision of the State of Palestine for independence and establishing an independent Palestinian State with sovereignty over its land, borders and natural resources within the framework of international laws and legitimacy. This study aimed to assess the capacity of the land management system in Palestine and identify gaps and needs for the development and management of the land sector in Palestine in light of political instability. The conclusions related to this study on land administration in Palestine are outlined below.

There is no comprehensive and unified system for land administration, as the Palestinian institutions related to land administration are still influenced by the historical and political legacy of the Palestinian cause, represented by the succession of non-Palestinian control over Palestinian lands from the time of the Ottoman Empire until 1918 and the British mandate until 1948 and the Israeli occupation in 1948 of more than 78 per cent of the historical lands of Palestine. During the period between 1948 and 1967, the Jordanian administration controlled the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and the Egyptian Administration controlled the Gaza Strip until 1967. Israel completed its control of all Palestinian lands in 1967 after the war and occupied all Palestinian lands, including the West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

Ottoman, British, Jordanian and Egyptian laws, as well as Israeli military decisions related to land administration, are still applied today in the Palestinian territories. With the establishment of the PNA in 1996, Palestinians began working to develop the land sector; unfortunately, the PNA is yet to formulate a Palestinian land law to date. This has led to multiple and conflicting laws on land administration in Palestine and poses a real challenge to decision makers in dealing with land issues. On the other hand, at the time of the Israeli occupation of all Palestinian lands in 1967, only about 30 per cent of the Palestinian lands were officially registered, which allowed the occupation forces to exploit the legal loopholes to control the Palestinian lands in the West Bank and East Jerusalem.

Since the founding of the PNA in 1994 and until 2006, the PNA did not implement any project to settle the lands in Palestine, and in 2006 the Palestinian Territory Authority began a project to settle the Palestinian lands, but without much success in the settlement processes. This prompted the Palestinian government in 2016 to establish a commission to complete the land settlement process in Palestine within a strategic plan until 2022. Today, more than 45 per cent of the Palestinian lands are still not officially registered. The settlement processes are still ongoing and it is expected that many years will be

needed to complete them. This reality has created problems and challenges in the processes of registering, appraising, and developing Palestinian lands.

Land tenure

There is a general weakness regarding the availability of land tenure information, especially concerning women's land tenure rights.

There is a high prevalence of displacement of Palestinians from their lands due to the successive wars since the 1948 war, the 1967 war, the popular uprisings in 1987, the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000, and the Gaza wars of 2014 and 2021. Moreover, Israeli policies and practices play a major role today in the displacement of Palestinians from their lands, especially in Area C and East Jerusalem City, such as the Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood in the City of Jerusalem, from where Israeli Administration aims to displace more than 27 Palestinian families from their homes. On the other hand, internal Palestinian conflicts, whether partisan or family, have led to the displacement of many Palestinian families from their lands and properties. During the preparation of this study, the Israeli army launched a war on the Gaza Strip for 11 days, and more than 50,000 Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their homes and lands (Ma'am Agency, 2021).

The types of land holdings classified since the Ottoman and British mandate periods in Palestine vary greatly, creating major problems in the process of land management.

Rural and urban areas are quite different in terms of the cost of purchasing land and properties. The population lacks knowledge regarding the procedures for acquiring and registering land rights. In general, obtaining financing and loans to buy land and property is not very difficult in Palestine, despite it being a little more difficult for women compared to men.

There is a survey system in Palestine, but it does not cover all Palestinian lands due to geopolitical obstacles, and the digital information of the system is insufficient and ineffective for all types of landholdings. There are about 17 land registry offices in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, with one office in each governorate and, on average, about 10 employees in each office. In general, the process of registering new lands and real estate and amending them is not difficult if the necessary documents are available. Land registration fees average about USD 300, in addition to 2–3 per cent of the land value in the West Bank and 1–2 per cent of the land value in the Gaza Strip.

The cadastral system in Palestine uses cadastral maps and maps of water bodies and borders in addition to maps of land use and properties in some areas. It also uses survey system maps in decision-making processes for development projects and spatial planning.

Land value

There is an appraisal system for lands and properties in Palestine, but it is not uniform and comprehensive for all geographical areas and types of landholdings. In general, the estimation process is concentrated within the Palestinian cities and communities more than in the rural areas and outside the cities. Further, land valuation systems are not subject to clear and specific standards but are subject to the jurisprudence and experiences of individual evaluators.

There is a system for collecting taxes on land and real estate properties, but it is more concentrated in urban areas than in rural areas. It should also be noted that Palestinian municipalities do not have the power to collect taxes directly inside cities and communities, as the central government collects taxes and returns them to the municipalities in a manner that is often considered unfair and non-transparent. This creates many problems for these municipalities in managing and developing lands in their cities.

There is no effective, comprehensive and unified digital system for the land and real estate valuation process and tax collection, which leads to weakness in the process of collecting financial revenues for the government and local authorities. This negatively affects the development process of the land sector in Palestine. Additionally, there is no clear effect of the valuation and tax collection processes on the planning and land development processes.

Land use and development

As a result of the geopolitical divisions in the Palestinian territories, the process of planning and developing land uses is weak at national and regional level. It is more effective at local level and within cities. Looking at development projects, the private sector wields more influence than the government.

There are regulatory laws for lands, but they are numerous and outdated, are not uniform within a Palestinian legal framework, and are not applied in all Palestinian areas.

Laws and mechanisms to acquire private lands for development are present; however, they are ineffective and unfair due to the weakness of laws and their application in all areas, in addition to the government's inability to compensate the owners of land and real estate, which weakens its chances in the process of acquiring and developing lands, especially in the Palestinian cities.

Land disputes resolution

There is a formal system to resolve disputes, but its procedures take a long time (sometimes many years), which pushes the population towards informal systems such as tribal courts and family solutions. There is a need to develop new tools to resolve disputes over land and properties "out-of-court" in informal mechanisms before moving to the formal court.

The formal system is inefficient due to the lack of judges and the weakness and multiplicity of laws. There is also a lack of knowledge among Palestinian citizens about procedures for resolving land-related disputes in the formal system.

In general, Palestinian women do not suffer from discrimination in the formal system for resolving land-related disputes according to the applicable laws and regulations, but this discrimination is clear in informal systems such as tribal and family. Statistics indicate that women's landownership does not exceed 33 per cent of registered lands.

Institutional framework

There is awareness in the Palestinian Government of the importance of developing the land administration sector, as the government established the PLA and the Palestinian LWSC in addition to issuing Law No. 6 of 2010 establishing the National Council for Lands, even though the Council is yet to

start working. However, there is a conflict of roles and powers between the Palestinian institutions related to land administration and the land management system. There is a clear weakness in monitoring the work of institutions working in the field of land management. This is the reason for the lack of a clear institutional framework to regulate cooperation between different institutions.

Human and financial resources

The Palestinian Government relies heavily on external grants such as from the World Bank and UN-Habitat in the process of developing the land sector. However, the institutions of land administration in Palestine still suffer from a weakness in the financial resources needed to develop the land sector. There is a shortage of qualified and specialized staff in the field of land administration. The training departments of operating Palestinian land institutions suffer from a lack of financial support to build technical capacities and heavily rely on international projects in the field of training.

Palestinian institutions also suffer from a lack of up-to-date tools and approaches in the field of land management. Many Palestinian institutions working in the field of land administration suffer from a shortage of equipment and software related to the development of the land sector, such as remote sensing and GIS.

Palestine also suffers from the lack of a clear structure with specific standards about spatial data structure. However, the government is working on a project to prepare and develop a system of standards for spatial data, but it is yet to be completed.

Education, training and scientific research

There is no academic programme specialized in land management in Palestinian universities, but there are several academic programmes related to land planning and development, such as geography, urban and regional planning, law and public administration programmes.

Many academic and scientific specializations related to the land sector are also absent in Palestinian universities (e.g. land laws and justice; land economics and development; real estate, valuation and taxation; social development and land management; advocacy; environmental development and land management; sustainability and land governance; rural land development; mapping, surveying, and geomatics for land management; smart land-use planning; geo-information technology and land management).

There are no specialized training centres in the field of land management in Palestinian universities, but there are some training centres that offer several specialized courses in some areas of land management, such as geographic information systems (GIS), surveying, and positioning systems, most of which are technical-vocational courses.

There are no research centres in Palestinian universities specializing in the field of land management, but there are some research centres in Palestine that are interested in the land sector, such as the LRC and the Institute for Applied Research. However, there is no research strategy directed towards land research. Most of the related research is conducted by individual research efforts of independent researchers or through master's theses in some master's programmes in geography, engineering, planning, law and public administration. Most of these research efforts deal with the impact of political

and geopolitical factors on Palestinian land-use planning and development. Also absent are important research titles in the field of land management in Palestine, such as land governance; law and justice, land economics and development, real estate valuation and taxation; advocacy; environmental management and sustainability; rural land development; mapping, surveying, and geomatics for land management; smart land-use planning; geo-information technology and land management and remote sensing for land change monitoring and modelling.

There is a clear gap between the outputs of scientific research related to the land sector and the practical application of the outputs of the research by institutions working in the field of land management, which weakens the scientific and practical impact of these research efforts in the Palestinian environment.

There are forms of cooperation between the various sectors related to land administration in Palestine, such as the government, universities, and international and community institutions, but there is no systematic framework for organizing this cooperation. In addition, many international institutions implement a number of development projects related to the development of the land sector, particularly in the Jerusalem and Area C regions. However, they suffer from poor coordination among them within a clear and specific strategy, which leads to the repetition and conflict of a number of these projects.

In general, there is a weakness in the learning offers to support the legal, economic (land valuation), social, rural studies and comprehensive land administration aspects (land value and land dispute resolution). These aspects are the main priorities for developing the land administration in Palestine. Consequently, there is a need to pay more attention to these aspects in the learning and research offers of the higher education system in the future.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The main recommendation of this study is to build and develop a comprehensive and unified system for land administration in Palestine, supported by Palestinian national policies and informed by the foundation of the liberation of the Palestinian lands and establishment of a Palestinian State with sovereignty over land, water and borders. In addition, a unified legal and institutional framework for the system must be established with sufficient and qualified professional personnel. The system's sustainability hinges on financial support from the government, complemented by the relevant international institutions. An effective education and training system capable of supporting the market and institutions working in the field of land administration in Palestine should be developed. Further, scientific research could play a significant role in developing the land management system by formulating national research policies towards land management issues in Palestine and linking the outputs of scientific research with practice in land management, especially in light of political instability. The system must also be built on the basis of cooperation and knowledge and experience exchange between all land management stakeholders in Palestine.

Legal Reforms

- Activating Law No. 6 of 2010 regarding the establishment of a National Council for the Palestinian Territories headed by the President and the membership of several Palestinian Government institutions and representatives of relevant community organizations to
 - Approve general land policies,
 - Approve the plans, programmes and activities of the Land Authority,
 - Approve the annual budget of the Authority,
 - Approve the Authority's periodic and annual reports,
 - Approve the regulations and submit them to the Council of Ministers for approval.
- There is a need to develop and approve the draft Palestinian land law that has been on the agenda of the Legislative Council since 2004. This will clarify the legal provisions related to the management of the land file to be compiled and unified, as well as remove contradictions and overlaps.
- Any new legislation approving land issues should consider the unification of the classifications and divisions of lands in all Palestinian areas in a way that leads to the unification of the concept of landownership in Palestine.
- Consolidation of the provisions related to the management of state lands, and the mechanisms for their disposal, provided that the prohibition of disposing of these lands by sale is emphasized.
- The new legislation related to land tenure should be developed to fill the gaps in the land laws used in Palestine that allow the Israeli authorities to confiscate Palestinian lands, especially in Area C.
- Promoting Bedouin's tenure of land and the right to use, especially in Area C.
- Promoting medium and large holdings, especially in the agricultural sector.
- Completing the land and water settlement process in the Palestinian lands, where there is still more than 45 per cent of the Palestinian lands unregistered in the West Bank, as a base for developing the Palestinian land management system.
- Enhancing public landownership by developing land acquisition laws and investment plans, and providing financial compensation programmes for landowners, especially in Palestinian cities and communities.
- Supporting women's right to possess and use land in the formal and informal system to resolve land disputes, especially in tribal and community courts.
- Supporting the right of vulnerable groups in society to acquire, retain and use land and to have their land disputes resolved.

- Developing a social system to resolve disputes over land before heading to the formal system to relieve pressure on formal courts.
- Increasing the number of judges in the Palestinian official system for resolving land disputes in order to speed up the process of resolving land disputes.

Institutional Reforms

- Building and developing a comprehensive and unified institutional system for land administration in Palestine based on Law No. 6 of 2010 regarding the establishment of a National Council for the Palestinian territories.
- Reviewing and identifying roles and mandates of the different stakeholders from various categories and sectors.
- Expand and develop the institutional framework by integrating all the land management stakeholders in Palestine, such as academia, international and civil organizations, as well as the private sector.
- Addressing the inconsistencies and in conflicts in roles and mandates among the land management stakeholders within the new institutional system for land administration in Palestine.
- Due to the political and geopolitical status of Palestine, there is a need to promote the principle of decentralization in the land administration system with the possibility of using a mixed system between centralization and decentralization, especially between municipalities and government ministries related to land administration.
- Strengthening the monitoring of the Palestinian Council of Ministers over the performance of the various institutions related to land administration, especially in the case of the formation of the National Council for Land Administration.

Human and Financial Resources Development

- Increasing financial support, in particular government support for land administration institutions.
- Unifying the land appraisal system, resolving conflicts in the appraisal system, and setting unified standards for all institutions, especially for professional appraisers.
- Developing a tax collection mechanism to increase government revenues from the land administration sector.
- Enhancing the financial support for local authorities, especially municipalities, in order to enhance the work of these municipalities in the process of managing and planning lands in Palestinian cities.

- Reviewing and evaluating the performance of the administrative and professional staff in the institutions of land administration and restructuring based on scientific specialization and competence.
- Increasing the number of specialized professionals in land administration institutions in Palestine to cover the need for specialized professional staff.
- Establishing a land national training centre under the framework of the National Council for Land Administration in Palestine to train and develop administrative and professional staff in the field of land management and to give specialized certificates in the field of land administration.
- Development of training centres in institutions related to land administration in order to develop the competencies of respective staff, in particular government officials, according to each institution's specific needs.
- Linking the Palestinian institutions related to land administration with international institutions in the field of land management in order to transfer international expertise to Palestine within a strategic plan to raise the efficiency of Palestinian institutions.

Technical Reforms

- Developing new tools for land management in Palestine by adopting some GLTN tools for land management and modifying them to align with the Palestinian conditions.
- Unifying and developing the digital land management system in Palestine under the Palestinian national land council.
- Supporting the Geomolg platform as one of the land management digital tools in Palestine.
- Establishing and developing GIS units in the local governments to support the land management process at the local level.
- Establishing and developing the spatial decision support system for land management in Palestine, especially in PLA.
- Supporting and developing the spatial data infrastructure system project and unifying the spatial data standards for all the organizations related to land management.
- Providing financial support for the development of equipment and software structure related to land administration, such as software for GIS, photogrammetry, remote sensing and GPS systems.

Interventions in Training and Education

The Palestinian education system could play an important role in supporting land management by developing three main areas, namely education and training, scientific research and development and cooperation projects. As such, this study made the following recommendations:

- Setting up a national strategic plan for integrating the land management issues in the Palestinian education system, including curricula for schools and higher education.

- Developing the role of the universities as educational, training, research and development centres to support land management in Palestine.
- Establishing new academic programmes in land management at Palestinian universities at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, with an emphasis on the following topics: Land laws in Palestine and justice aspects; Land economics and development; Real estate, valuation and taxation; Social development and land management; Popular advocacy and land management; Environmental development and land management; Global sustainability and land governance; Rural land development; Mapping, surveying and geomatics for land management; Smart land-use planning; Geo-information technology and land management.
- Establishing new units and training programmes in land management at Palestinian universities to support land management staff in Palestine, with a focus on the following topics: GIS for land management; Remote sensing for land change monitoring; Mapping, surveying, and geomatics for land management; Real estate training short courses; Land valuation training short courses; Land taxation training short courses; Land-use planning; The SDGs and land management; Women's land rights; Vulnerable groups and land development.

Interventions in Scientific Research Fields Related to Land Management

- Supporting the universities as scientific research centres for land management development.
- Developing a strategic plan for national land research in Palestine in cooperation with the Palestinian Research Council at the Ministry of Higher Education, Palestinian universities and the research centres.
- Based on the strategic plan for national land research in Palestine, there is a need to develop cooperation between national efforts and government, civil and international organizations and private sectors to fill the gap between the scientific research aspects and the real world and to transfer the scientific research outputs into the implemented process in collaboration with land management stakeholders.
- Identifying the land research priorities in Palestine based on the evaluation of the impacts of research efforts on land management will help identify the gaps, needs, and proposed topics for land development. The following research topics should be investigated further: Land governance; Land laws and justice; Land economics and development; Real estate, valuation and taxation development; Social development and land management; Popular advocacy and land management; Environmental development and land management; Global sustainability and land governance; Rural land development; Mapping, surveying, and geomatics for land management; Smart land-use planning; Geo-information technology and land management; Remote sensing for land change monitoring and modelling; The SDGs and land management; Women's and vulnerable groups' land rights.

Areas of Potential Collaboration

Enhancing cooperation efforts is the keyword in developing land management in Palestine under the Israeli occupation. Palestinians need to develop their collaboration networks globally and locally to enhance the land management process through the following recommendations:

At the local level

- Mapping land management stakeholders, including academia, international organizations, civil bodies, government institutions and the private sector.
- Analysis of existing collaborative efforts between the stakeholders to identify the gaps and needs in the collaboration framework regarding land management in Palestine.
- Developing a strategic plan for enhancing the potential collaboration among the land management stakeholders based on the SDGs, NUA and Palestinian State strategy.
- Strengthening the collaboration network efforts among the Palestinian land management stakeholders in order to support the steadfastness of Palestinian institutions and residents against Israeli policies and practices to control the Palestinian territories through legal support, popular advocacy and financial support, especially in the City of Jerusalem and in Area C.

At the global level (international cooperation)

- Increasing financial support to Palestinian institutions related to the land sector.
- Developing the capabilities of Palestinian institutions in managing lands by supporting training, education and scientific research plans related to the development of the land sector.
- Supporting Palestinian institutions with new approaches, methods and tools for land management through the transfer of international knowledge and expertise to Palestine, especially the land management tools recommended by GLTN and UN-Habitat.
- Encouraging international organizations to support the Palestinians' rights to administer their lands based on the decisions of international legitimacy, the United Nations and international law.

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