

# **Regionalization and Capacity Strengthening of Solid Waste Management Service Providers in Palestine: Lessons Learned from the Technical Assistance Project**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Local Government Units (LGUs) take crucial roles providing public services to the local population in Palestine under politically, geographically, and economically constrained conditions. There are 417 LGUs in Palestine, out of which 142 are classified as municipalities and 275 as village councils (VCs) (World Bank Group, 2017). LGUs are responsible to conduct municipal solid waste management (SWM) service including waste collection, road sweeping, and disposal. Most municipalities have a population above 5,000 inhabitants while generally VCs are smaller than that, sometimes less than 1,000. For such small administrative bodies, it is difficult to plan and implement full scale of municipal SWM service. Instead of LGUs individually providing SWM services, multiple LGUs jointly organize a regionalized SWM agencies, Joint Service Councils (JSCs) for SWM, within the range of the governorate level. They are seeking economy of scale from one side and efficiently use the available financial, material, and human resources on the other side. It is the general direction of the National SWM Strategy (2017-2022) Palestine and strengthening the capacity of JSCs for enabling them to perform as fully functional SWM service accountable to citizens is the key issue.

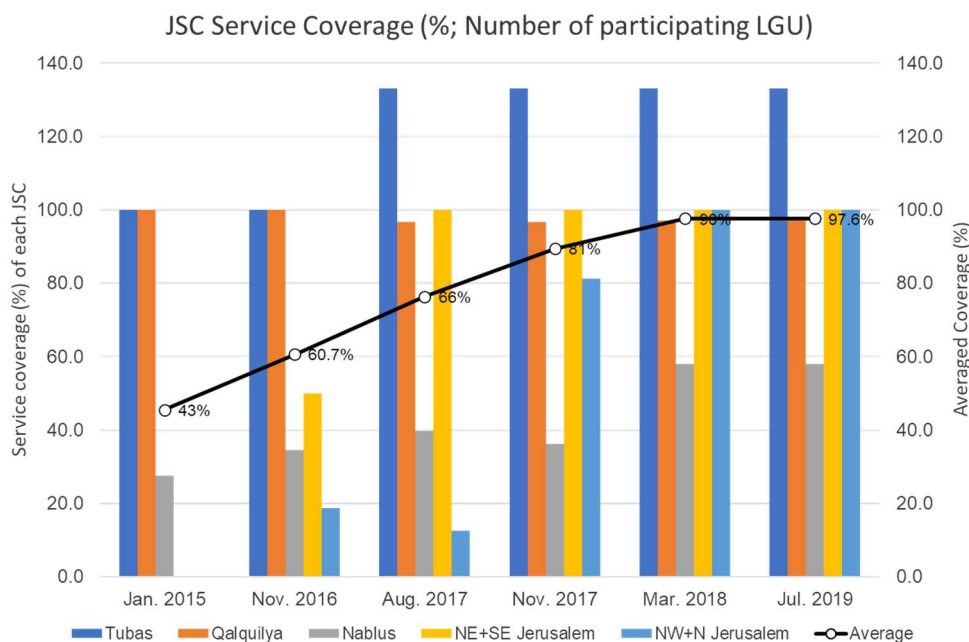
## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR REGIONALIZATION AND STRENGTHENING CAPACITY**

The efforts of large number of individual LGUs have been gradually regionalized by the Ministry of Government (MoLG) through JSCs to provide services jointly, where 13 JSCs have been established in West Bank and 2 JSCs in Gaza Strip. Three JSCs are basically established as a sanitary landfill-based JSCs, while others are collection service-oriented JSCs. Aiming at a sustainable SWM by JSCs, 5 JSCs which were assessed insufficient level of capacity for SWM service in 2014 were targeted for capacity strengthening by the MoLG-JICA Technical Assistance Project from 2015 to 2019 (MoLG-JICA, 2019; Fig. 1).

In order to enhance their capacity in SWM, the Project implemented the following eight supports: (i) individual consultations with local experts; (ii) monitoring and guidance from MoLG, (iii) developing human resources through training of JSC staff members; (iv) raising awareness at different level, such as LGUs, JSC Board of Directors, Staffs, community, and citizens; (v) developing technical and administrative manuals and guidelines; (vi) formulation of bylaws and guidelines; (vii) provision of equipment; and (viii) sharing information and technical know-hows through organizing regular JSCs meetings and workshops.

With such supports, the targeted 5 JSCs gradually strengthened their capabilities as seen in the changes in

the service coverage (%) of each JSC (Fig. 1); for example, the Jerusalem JSCs, which were originally only names without providing service in 2015, they became active service providers in both name and reality, and SWM services successfully expanded over Palestine. It could also contribute to reduce the open dumpsites used by LGUs, which were deteriorating the environment and public health condition.



**Figure 2: Increase of SWM service coverage rate as an indicator of capacity strengthening of targeted 5 JSCs during the MoLG-JICA Project from 2015 to 2019.**

## CONCLUSIONS

In the conditions of Palestine, the JSC-based regional solid waste management, namely a regionalization of municipal SWM (Kojima, 2019), is quite effective and efficient for providing equal service to wider population as well as for ensuring environmental protection and public health. In conducting technical assistance project, it is necessary not only to integrate local administrations (LGUs), but also to comprehensively develop their capacities at individual, organizational, institutional, and the societal levels.

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