

مركز تطوير

مركز تطوير المؤسسات الأهلية الفلسطينية
NGO Development Center

Strategic Plan

2022 - 2026

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“NDC’s Strategic Plan 2022-2026 helps to create a pathway whereby NDC supports the further realization of an independent Palestinian NGO sector that is resilient, responsive, transparent, and adaptable to the constantly evolving landscape of challenges and needs in Palestinian society. NDC aims to do so through supporting NGOs to respond to the community’s most pressing needs with financial opportunities as a grant-making mechanism and capacity development through technical support.”



NDC Board Chairman
Zahi Khouri

“Supporting the NGO sector in Palestine remains a critical endeavor as the sector continues to play a central role in the social, economic, and psychological well-being of Palestinians. As NDC, our role is to contribute to an environment whereby the NGO sector has the flexibility and support to innovate and address the community’s needs in a way that results in high-impact and sustainable outcomes with efficiency, accountability, and transparency. This new Strategic Plan lays the foundation for our work in the coming years to continue to meet and exceed our targets.”



NDC Director
Ghassan Kasabreh

1. Introduction and General Background

The NGO Development Center (NDC) is one of the largest Palestinian institutions that works in close partnership with NGOs and community-based organizations to enhance the quality of social service delivery in Palestine, particularly in marginalized and underserved areas. NDC’s aim is to develop the capacities of the Palestinian NGO sector to become more responsive and effective. Over the years, NDC’s programs and grants have provided skills, tools, and financial and technical assistance to meet social needs and enhance self-reliance. NDC works to empower Palestinian NGOs to become more sustainable and to contribute to the social and economic development of the community through supporting and developing the financial, human, and institutional capacities of NGOs and their respective networks. The intended result of this approach is a Palestinian NGO sector that is more transparent, accountable, and responsive to citizen’s needs. NDC’s approach also contributes to increasing sectoral cooperation and exchanging experiences through various programs, such as the “Palestinian NGO Portal - Massader” and the Palestinian NGOs Code of Conduct. The Center’s dedication to the development of the NGO sector as a whole, as well as of the NGOs individually, reflects the comprehensiveness of its approach to sustainable development and the complementarity between its interventions and programs.

NDC was established in late 2006 building on the achievements of the first and second phases of the Palestinian NGO Project (PNGO), which was implemented by the Welfare Association Consortium and supported by the World Bank. NDC was created to respond to the continuing needs at the time to ensure the creation of an independent Palestinian non-governmental organization that offers a sustainable mechanism for providing financial and technical support to the NGO sector. The World Bank supported a third phase of PNGO which focused on the establishment of NDC as an independent Palestinian NGO which was formally registered in March 2006. On October 31st, 2006, following NDC’s registration, the Welfare Consortium was dissolved, and NDC officially commenced its activities.

NDC’s mandate is derived from the support of four major Palestinian NGO networks and unions (The Palestinian NGO Network, the Palestinian General Union of Charitable Societies, the Palestinian National Institute for NGOs, and the Palestinian Union of NGOs in Gaza), as well as from strong relationships with its strategic partners (the Palestinian Government, NGOs, public and private sectors, and donors). Its work is governed by the General Assembly, which consists of 25 members from the public and private sectors, civil society, and representatives of the aforementioned networks and unions. Every three years, nine members of the General Assembly are elected to represent NDC’s Board of Directors.

Since its establishment, NDC witnessed steady growth and expansion institutionally, programmatically, and geographically, accumulating vast experience and knowledge and becoming recognized as a professional and credible institution that enjoys the confidence of Palestinians and donors alike.

NDC has established strategic partnerships with several international donors, including; the World Bank, the European Union, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), Denmark, Norway, Switzerland, the Islamic Development Bank, the Welfare Association, and the United Palestinian Appeal (UPA), among others. Through these partnerships, NDC has been able to implement programs and projects which include diverse financial grant packages and capacity-building programs to the NGO sector, mobilizing over \$110 million in funding and benefiting approximately 450 NGOs in addition to NGO umbrella networks and unions.

2. Methodology

Since its establishment, NDC has implemented two strategic plans (2010-2014) and (2014-2018) respectively, the latter of which was extended through to the end of 2021. In early 2020, NDC started to draft a new strategic plan that would guide and govern the implementation of the Center's various programs and activities for the next phase. However, the start of the global Coronavirus pandemic, and the discovery of the first infections in Palestine at the beginning of March 2020, as well as the measures that were taken to mitigate its spread, made it impossible to continue the planning process at that time. As restrictions were lifted, and the vaccine became available, work resumed again in August 2021.

A participatory and interactive approach was used to encourage inputs and discussion from NDC's board members, management, and employees. Collectively, they undertook an in-depth strategic analysis of NDC's current state, and reaffirmed/developed its values, future vision, and mission. Participants took consensual decisions concerning the different strategic elements that would best address current challenges and follow new avenues that have arisen as a result of the prevailing political, legal, and socio-economic conditions. The key challenge in this respect has been to preserve and enhance NDC's distinctive character and identity, whilst continuing to enhance its programmatic coverage and the effectiveness of its implementation mechanisms.

In developing the strategic framework, a targeted approach was guided by the "Theory of Change Model", where the 'pathway of change' illustrates the sequence of steps to be undertaken in order to reach the desired change. Consequently, the process started with defining a collective vision of the desired 'ultimate change', i.e., the vision. This was followed by 'backwards mapping' which worked from the vision backwards to the desired long-term change (the 'goal'). Then, participants identified the medium-term results/change, i.e., the 'strategic objectives', followed by the intermediate results/change i.e., 'outcomes'. After that, a set of 'strategic directions' (i.e., operational policies) were developed to achieve the identified results.

Although the approach was "holistic" in its orientation, it was "selective" in terms of focusing on the most urgent issues and those that could be dealt with considering available resources during the next five years and would also have the greatest impact. Emphasis was placed on defining the most efficient and effective operational policies to achieve the desired results.

This document summarizes the main aspects of the strategic plan. After a quick review of the prevailing general context, the document presents a brief outline of the main historical markers that has shaped NDC as an organization. It then presents a SWOT analysis (Strengths,

Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) of NDC's internal and external influences and the identified strategic issues on which it will focus in the coming period. NDC's agreed-upon value system, vision, and mission, along with the results framework, including the strategic goal and objectives, short- and medium-term interventions, a monitoring and evaluation framework as well as a risk management framework are further detailed within this strategy.

3. Current Situation and Strategic Issues

3.1 Context

Currently, Palestinians are living through the most difficult conditions since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority. In addition to global challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, Palestinians face several unique challenges at multiple levels: political, economic, and social. The general circumstances detailed below reflect the operational context within which NDC functions, and the impacts of this context on the development of NDC's future strategic orientation.

Demographic Features of Palestinian Society¹

By mid-2021, the Palestinian population is estimated at roughly 5.23 million, about 3.12 million of whom are in the West Bank and 2.11 million are in the Gaza Strip². The population growth rate is estimated at 2.5%³, which ranks relatively higher than the global average. Challenges to sustainable development and the economy can be directly linked to the strains that the growing population places on basic services such as education, healthcare, and employment, as well as on natural resources and infrastructure.

Palestinian society is also characterized by a young median age, whereby 57.8% of the population is under the age of 25. However, current data indicates that there is a gradual decline in population growth among young people (less than 15), as a result of a decline in fertility rates⁴, which has led to an increase in the median age from 16.4 years in 2000 to 20.8 years in 2020⁵. The result is an increase in the number of people of working age.

A key consideration in the development of NDC's strategic focus is to reflect this demographic trend and invest in Palestinian human capital through training and qualification, boosting formal education as well as vocational and technical training, especially for young people, in order to meet the needs of society and the job market and create decent employment opportunities. Doing so may mitigate some of the risks inherent in Palestinian society such as poverty and unemployment, which may only worsen if left unaddressed. In parallel, special attention must be paid to improving the quality and quantity of various social and support services.

1. West Bank including Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip.

2. [World Population Day Press Release](#) from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 11/07/2021

3. Palestinian Central Statistics Agency, "Palestine Statistical Yearbook 2020", p. 25.

4. The Palestinian Central Statistics Authority estimates that fertility rates at the national level have declined steadily from 6.06 in 1994 to 4.9 and then to 4.6 in 2000 and 2004, respectively, to 3.8 during the period (2017-2019).

5. Palestinian National Information Center, [Palestinian News and Information Agency - WAFA](#)

Political Context

In recent years, Palestinians have been suffering from the most dangerous political conditions since the outset of the protracted conflict. The three-decades-long negotiations between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel have reached a dead end, and the dream of establishing an independent state in the foreseeable future has become difficult to imagine. Meanwhile, Israel continues its discriminatory policies and tactics against Palestinians and their land, through which it strives to strengthen its control over all elements of Palestinian life, especially in Jerusalem and H2 designated area in Hebron, as well as in areas classified as "C". The Israeli government also continues to protect, expand, increase, and gradually annex Israeli settlements within the West Bank in violation of international law. Particularly, the Israeli government is working tirelessly to Judaize East Jerusalem by erasing its Palestinian character and demographic composition, isolating it from neighboring Palestinian communities through the further establishment of settlements and settlement neighborhoods inside and around East Jerusalem, as well as displacing its residents, either forcibly or through coercion. Additionally, Israel is continuously attempting to control Palestinian holy sites, as well as preventing Palestinians from establishing their own independent projects, undertaking new construction, and otherwise impeding any development efforts in Jerusalem, even the implementation of donor-funded programs for the benefit of Jerusalemites.

The prevention of development is more apparent in the Gaza Strip, where since the 90's, Israel has completely separated Gaza from the West Bank and deliberately attempted to restrain the population living there. Conditions only worsened following the victory of Hamas in the Legislative Council elections. Since June 2007, Israeli authorities imposed a severe air, sea, and land blockade on the Strip, in addition to repeated lethal military operations. Further controls imposed on Gazans by the military include; severe restrictions on the movement of people and goods, restrictions on the activity of farmers in borderlands, and fishermen at sea, as well as controlling the supply of fuel and electric power to Gaza, in addition to seizing gaseous resources off the coastline and depriving Gazans from utilizing their natural resources.

At the same time, the political and administrative division between Gaza and the West Bank continues to cast a shadow over all Palestinian political efforts. As Fatah and Hamas have failed to make significant progress towards national reconciliation, the dialogue between them and other Palestinian factions remains stagnant. The continuation of this division has led to a widening gap between the two regions, and to the emergence of different political, legal, administrative, economic, social, and cultural systems in each area due to the varying conditions that exist.

This division has also hindered holding general elections in all Palestinian territories, thus preventing Palestinians from exercising their constitutional right to elect their representatives. It has also led to further fragmentation of the Palestinian political system, and with it a deepening polarization and political factionalism. The failure to hold elections has rendered political institutions unaccountable and the judiciary vulnerable to political intervention, thus leading to weakening public trust, reducing public freedoms and human rights protections, undermining the independence and plurality of civil society, and thereby limiting the democratic evolution of society.

Economic Context

Beyond the unstable political and regulatory framework that is incapable of providing adequate resources required for economic growth and development, the Palestinian economy suffers from a set of unique challenges. Even prior to the onset of COVID-19, the economy was weak and stagnant, lurching from one crisis to another, and was barely able to keep pace with population growth, create employment opportunities, and generate the income required to meet the increasing costs of a moderate standard of living for Palestinian citizens.

At the start of March 2020, the government enacted a number of safety precautions and measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 across the Palestinian territory, resulting in the disruption of the majority of economic activities and nearly all aspects of daily life. The outcome of which was a significant deterioration of the already fragile economic situation, to the point where UNCTAD⁶ rated 2020 the worst year for the Palestinian economy since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994. While real GDP growth fell to 0.9% in 2019, down from 1.2% in 2018 and 1.4% in 2017, in 2020, the Palestinian economy recorded a sharp contraction of 12%, the worst since 2002, which was at the height of the Al-Aqsa Intifada.

At the same time, the Palestinian government was facing a stifling financial crisis and an increasing deficit, both of which negatively impact the state of the economy as a whole. The continuation of the budget deficit, and the accumulation of public debt, poses significant risks to the long-term viability of the macroeconomic and fiscal budget frameworks, impact expenditure planning, and limit the implementation of certain fiscal policies and priorities. For instance, the budget usually focuses on supporting marginalized and poor segments of the population, as well as gender issues. However, when revenues decline, these focus areas diminish, salaries, security, health care, and education are priorities. Because of COVID-19, expenditures in the health and security sectors increased while revenues declined, compromising the reach and quality of other public services.

Since the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000, Gaza has faced a profoundly difficult economic situation, preventing the area from keeping pace with the rising population. Data indicates that the compound annual growth rate of the Gazan economy since 1994 is only 1%⁷, while the population growth rate is 2.9% per year⁸, causing an inevitable increase in unemployment and poverty, as well as a decline in basic social services. The spread of the pandemic further contributed to a deterioration in the economy causing it to contract by 12% in 2020.⁹

Since the beginning of 2021, and following eased restrictions related to the pandemic, the Palestinian economy began to recover. According to World Bank estimates, the economy grew by 5.4% in real terms during the first half of 2021¹⁰. This improvement was entirely driven by

6. "The Economic Costs of the Palestinian People Due to the Israeli Occupation: Poverty in the West Bank Between Years 2000-2019". UNCTAD September 28, 2021.

7. World Bank Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, November 17th, 2021, p. 17.

8. Palestinian National Information Center

9. World Bank Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee, November 17th, 2021, p. 17.

10. Ibid, p. 7.

the West Bank economy and the return of many Palestinian workers to work inside Israel.

So long as there is no substantial change to the general political situation, as well as the occupation of Palestine overall, improving economic conditions in Palestine will continue to be challenging.

Social Context

The living conditions for Palestinians continue to deteriorate, given the current political and economic situation. The economic stagnation and ongoing financial crisis have led to increased unemployment rates, widespread poverty, and food insecurity. All of which pose significant challenges for many families, aggravate their inability to maintain a minimum standard of living, and render them unable to afford basic human needs. It has also limited their access to various services such as health, education, transportation, etc., especially in the Gaza Strip, where external support has shifted to relief and humanitarian aid rather than development.

The pandemic exacerbated accumulated economic and social pressures. The deterioration of living conditions paralleled the rise in unemployment and poverty rates. Despite a significant improvement in the West Bank's unemployment rate in the two years preceding the pandemic, it declined to 16.9% at the end of the second quarter of 2021. Furthermore, the unemployment situation in Gaza was already worsened by the siege, conflicts, and the deteriorating economic situation. With the eruption of the pandemic, the unemployment rate rose to 44.7% by the end of the second quarter of 2021, the highest in the world.

Workers in the informal sector and day laborers in both regions were the most vulnerable to the pandemic's effects due to the absence of employment contracts guaranteeing their compensation. Young people (15-29 years old) and especially females, were the most affected, as the youth unemployment rate reached 39.0% at the end of the second quarter of 2021 (Females 61.5% and males 33.3%)¹¹. Perhaps the high unemployment rate among women within traditional Palestinian communities is linked to social beliefs that prohibit women from working in certain professions, as well as the patriarchal nature that still dominates the Palestinian labor market.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (Palestinian Labor Force Survey - Annual Report 2020), the highest youth unemployment rates (54%) were reported among graduates with an intermediate diploma or higher level of education (with a clear difference between males [39%] and females [69%]). The outcome of this is an increase in immigration of young educated Palestinians to places where there are more employment opportunities, which then renders Palestinian society unable to make optimal use of its available human resources and achieve the desired development outcomes.

There is a direct correlation between unemployment and poverty, as well as economic and social marginalization. The poverty rate has climbed significantly since 2016, reaching 24% in 2018. (14% in the West Bank; 53% in the Gaza Strip). Due to COVID-19, many more families slipped below the poverty line. According to the World Bank, the poverty rate reached 28.9%

11. Ibid, P. 8.

in 2020, an increase of 7 percentage points over the past four years. This means that in 2020, around 1,400,000 Palestinians were living in poverty¹².

Tens of thousands of Palestinians lost their jobs due to Coronavirus and its subsequent waves and new variants, as well as the related precautionary public health measures. Numerous small and medium-sized businesses, particularly in the tourism sector, were unable to continue operations. Many families exhausted their savings and fell into debt.

The pandemic presented the health sector with enormous hurdles, revealing the sector's insufficient absorptive capacity and the capabilities to deal with such situations. Numerous hospitals and health centers were dedicated to caring for Coronavirus patients. Most non-emergency procedures were postponed, and health care for regular people declined. In reality, this virus will become endemic and continue until an effective vaccine is developed. The presence of Coronavirus patients in hospitals will become a permanent condition and will likely force the government to reduce some of its regular medical and social expenditures in response to the continuation of the pandemic and the consequent worsening of the overall health situation.

Furthermore, the pandemic's spread complicated the educational system, as students could not regularly attend school, university, or other educational institutions. Face-to-face education was frequently replaced by distance education. This proved to be rather ineffective, since there was a lack of sufficient knowledge and experience, as well as a shortage of appropriate equipment and infrastructure, which proved to be particularly true for students in Gaza due to frequent power cuts and restrictions on fuel supplies to power plants by Israel.

In Palestine, people with disabilities suffer from a lack of safety measures and services, the inability to maintain social distance (due to their care needs by others), and society's and the health system's inability to adequately meet their needs. The same is true for the elderly, who are already excluded from a significant portion of public life. They are required to distance themselves more because they are among the most vulnerable and susceptible to severe illness and death should they contract the virus.

Although public awareness and interest in treating mental health has recently increased, especially with the spread of Coronavirus and the emotional impact of the repeated wars on Gaza, it is still largely ignored. Individuals are exposed to a multitude of stressful situations as a result of the unique conditions under which Palestinians survive. The psychological impacts of such pressures are undoubtedly resulting in an increase of individuals with mental health issues¹³. In this context, and as a result of increasing economic and psychological strains, incidents of violence including domestic violence, violence against women, girls, children, and the elderly, have heightened exponentially¹⁴.

12. Ibid.

13. Report by Wafa Media Agency, 10/10/2021.

14. UNFPA, "Impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak and Lockdown on Family Dynamics and Domestic Violence in Palestine", June 2020.

Overall, life in Palestine has become more violent, which results not only in the aforementioned psychological situation, but also the proliferation of arms, and the spread of narcotics, especially among youth. This constitutes a serious threat to civil peace, jeopardizes social and human security, and has a detrimental effect on the cohesiveness and resilience of the Palestinian social fabric. This has also led to the escalation of tensions and the emergence of societal disintegration. Among these manifestations is the expansion of tribalism and clanship and the strengthening of their social power, which negatively impact women the most. The growth in clanship dominance impedes the development and growth of civil society in Palestine, which is supposed to transcend tribal, sectarian, and "local" institutions in the interests of citizenship, human rights, collective affiliation, and democratic governance.

Context within the NGO Sector

NGO work in Palestine dates back to the second half of the nineteenth century, which arose as political, literary, and charitable societies or youth groups. Their main focus was on national political issues as well as social and charitable work. The political conditions for Palestinians played a major role in the development and structure of the NGO sector, especially after Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the 1967 war and the events that followed. In the mid-1970s, voluntary youth committees emerged outside of the traditional charitable society framework. By the early 1980s, they had evolved into a group of mass movements with widespread membership that served as the social arms of various Palestinian political factions. Regardless of their political agendas, they all had a common goal: 'steadfastness on the land and resistance to the occupier' (also known as 'steadfastness and resistance'). This coincided with the institutionalization of NGO work and the convergence of national, developmental, and social-political actions. During that period, the old charitable societies were revived, and new types of specialized NGOs appeared, such as research institutes, human rights organizations, media institutions, and those focused on certain socioeconomic groups (such as people with special needs, the elderly, and others). This stage culminated with the outbreak of the first Intifada (in December 1987), which constituted a pivotal milestone in the development of NGOs. In the context of efforts to boycott the occupation authorities and separate from Israeli control, various NGOs worked, in conjunction with the popular committees that were formed at the time, to create alternative institutions and systems to provide services and to replace those associated with the occupation. They moved from providing services to enhance the steadfastness and resistance of the people to the occupation to building an independent and productive Palestinian society. At that time, the various organizations had to develop sufficient organizational and administrative skills in order to deal with the new "building" tasks. This marked the beginning of the "professionalization" of the NGO sector.

Following the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority, a new Palestinian reality emerged, which resulted in significant changes to the structure and content of the NGO sector. The continued occupation of large segments of Palestinian land required the continuation of the 'steadfastness and resistance' strategies. At the same time, 'building and development' strategies were required in order to prepare for the establishment of an

independent Palestinian state. Furthermore, a third set of strategies emerged that focused on redefining the socioeconomic and cultural content of a future Palestinian society. Thus, issues such as equality, democracy, human rights, policy formulation, and the rule of law became an integral part of their agenda.

In this context, NGOs called for the formation of bodies to reach common visions and positions regarding national development, as well as to expand their political role following the establishment of the National Authority. They also sought to improve coordination and shared learning among themselves. At the end of September 1993, the Palestinian NGO Network was announced as an umbrella organization for NGOs. Following this, the Palestinian National Institute for NGOs and the Palestinian Union of NGOs in the Gaza Strip were established, in addition to the Palestinian General Union of Charitable Societies, which had already been in existence since 1990. These networks played an important role in the outset of the National Authority, especially during discussions over the Charitable Associations and Civil Society Organizations Law of 2000 (the NGO Law). Later, the NGO sector witnessed the formation of several sectoral networks, coalitions, and coordinating bodies, including women, environmental, cultural, and human rights organizations, among others. They have varied capabilities and influence. The most effective of them were women's and human rights coalitions and networks, especially in defending Palestinian rights, monitoring Israeli violations, lobbying and advocacy locally and in international fora. Human rights organizations have played a prominent role in preparing the case files submitted to the International Criminal Court.

The establishment of the Authority provided new funding sources for NGOs, which led to the expansion of their roles and a diversification of specializations, rendering the Palestinian NGO sector to be one of the strongest in the Arab region. The availability of funds also led to an extraordinary increase in the number of organizations, reaching 4,616, with 42% in the West Bank, 31% in the Gaza Strip, 14% outside of Palestine, 11% in Jerusalem, and 2% in the area occupied in 1948¹⁵. Nevertheless, many of these institutions no longer operate.

The availability of this support also helped to develop the administrative and executive capacities of NGOs, exposing them to new methodologies, and enabling them to plan and implement their programs and activities more efficiently. NGOs provide 50% of primary health services, 34% of hospital services, and 100% of rehabilitative services for individuals with disabilities, in addition to other important resources such as childcare, kindergartens and nurseries, homes for the elderly, and agricultural development¹⁶. Moreover, a number of major Palestinian universities are registered as NGOs or charitable societies.

New funding opportunities also prompted many community-based NGOs to undergo significant institutional and organizational adjustments in order to be able to deal with and adapt to donor conditions and requirements. Many of the existing NGOs emerged from grassroots movements, and many of their leaders, activists, and volunteers began to serve as

15. The Palestinian Center for Policy Research and Strategic Studies - Masarat, "Fact Sheet: Civil Society Institutions and Palestinian Youth...Role Challenges", 2020

16. Dr. Mustafa Barghouti, "Why the attack on civil society?" An article posted on the Power of Attorney "Together" News on 10 November 2021

managers and employees in the newly established NGOs. Over time, this resulted in the loss of many active members within mass movements, the shrinking of their bases, the decline of their political role and their mobilizing and organizing impact in society. Mass movements became subordinate or attached in one way or another to the emerging “professional and specialized” institutions¹⁷.

Moreover, the growing increase in the number of NGOs, and the limited funding available, caused severe financial challenges for many institutions, particularly the smaller ones. Some of them were forced to close operations, while others were forced to lay off some of the staff and reduce their programs. With the recent decline in external aid for Palestine, the situation has become even more challenging. As a result, competition for funding has intensified, and NGOs’ influence on donor priorities and policies has weakened. In order to assure their long-term sustainability and prevent their collapse, NGOs, particularly those without alternative resources, have begun to align their programs and projects with the priorities set by donor agencies.

At the same, the number of international NGOs operating in Palestine increased, and many Palestinian NGOs began to be involved in their programs. International organizations are more equipped and have better access to donor money, and have become a new potential funding source for Palestinian NGOs. However, due to the higher salaries and benefits offered by foreign organizations, they are better able to attract professional and qualified staff, resulting in some Palestinian NGO workers preferring employment with them. As a consequence of this, a perception of unfair competition has grown among Palestinian NGOs in accessing donor money and in recruiting qualified and trained staff.

Interrelationships within the civil sector take several forms, some of which are strategic and others temporary. It varies depending on varying conditions, the nature of the task, the availability of resources, the required expertise or specialization, and occasionally the donor’s requirements. These relationships range between networking, joint implementation of a particular project or program, coordination, consultation, and the exchange of information. In many cases, the relationship is competitive.

Similarly, the relationship between NGOs and government institutions fluctuates between partnership, complementarity, and competition. On a number of occasions, NGOs and public institutions participated together in the implementation of a specific program or intervention. In other instances, NGOs implemented interventions or provided services that public institutions lacked the capacity, experience, or resources to do. At other times, public institutions contracted with or provided grants to NGOs to provide services or implement specific interventions on their behalf. Often, a competitive relationship prevails between the two parties, which could be attributed to lack of clarity regarding roles and sometimes a lack of mutual trust.

The establishment of the Palestinian National Authority provided ample space for the work of NGOs, which began to concentrate their efforts on influencing the formulation of laws

17. There are many other factors that led to the decline of grassroots movements, including the transition of some of its members to work within the Palestinian Authority, the decline in the work of political factions, and the emergence of dependency among citizens on the Palestinian Authority in order to achieve the establishment of a Palestinian state.

and policies, to contribute to or participate in the development of the emerging authority’s plans, and to monitor the performance of public institutions and ensure their accountability. However, since the middle of the previous decade, three overlapping factors have caused this space to shrink gradually.

With the increasing influence of Palestinian NGOs in international forums against the occupation, exposing its violations against Palestinians, and mobilizing support for their cause, the occupation authorities escalated their ongoing war against Palestinian NGOs by distorting their image and work and labeling a number of them as “terrorist organizations”. Israel tries to dry up the funding sources for these organizations, hamper their work, and silence all those who support them, thus forcing them to close. The second factor is the imposition of significant legal and administrative restrictions on the operation and funding of NGOs by the governing authorities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a result of the division among Palestinians and deepening political polarization. The third factor is the decline in financial support available to Palestine.

Similarly, the political-legal context within which Palestinian NGOs operate reduces the available civil space. Politically, there is the occupation with its repressive and racist practices, especially in Jerusalem. There is also the political and administrative division between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, each of which has a government with limited financial and professional capacity that assumes the majority of civil powers in the areas under its control. This political situation has generated four legal frameworks and systems that regulate and control the activities and governance of NGOs. In all areas classified as ‘Area C’ (including the areas behind the annexation and apartheid wall and part of the city of Hebron), a system of Israeli military orders and measures controls the operations of Palestinian NGOs. Jerusalem-based organizations operate in accordance with Israeli civil legislation. As a result of the political division, two separate legal systems regulate the work of NGOs in the Palestinian-controlled areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. These complex circumstances continue to affect the formation of organizations, the scope of their work and activities, the content and quality of their programs, and their financing, thus, over the years, has reduced the space available to them.

Despite the continuously shrinking space for civil society, NGOs continue to work towards preserving their roles through solidarity and networking with one another, as well as developing mechanisms to put pressure on governmental bodies to change their practices and procedures and amend laws that restrict their work.

Context of Funding for NGOs

The majority of Palestinian NGOs, including NDC, rely primarily on external funding. The lack of financial resources is perhaps one of the most serious challenges that Palestinian NGOs currently face. Reports from the Palestinian Ministry of Finance have confirmed that international aid to Palestine has been in a steady decline in recent years. Prior to 2015, the annual average aid to Palestine was one billion dollars. The maximum received was 1,978 million dollars in 2008, constituting 21% of the GDP at the time. In 2019, it had declined to

\$538.3 million, or 3.1% of GDP. The funding was further reduced by 31.3% to \$369.7 million in 2020. This decline continued in 2021, reaching barely 10% of previous levels¹⁸. Specifically, Arab support decreased sharply from \$265.5 million in 2019 to \$40 million in 2020¹⁹.

Factors for this decline are mainly attributed to the political situation. Since the signing of the Oslo Accords, the primary motive of most donors has been to support the Palestinian-Israeli peace process on the basis of a two-state solution. Over the years, the likelihood of achieving a peaceful resolution dwindled until it reached a dead end. This has led to a gradual erosion of donors' interest and to a growing sense of disappointment and frustration among them. Despite the political deadlock, donors remained generally supportive of Palestinians. Some of them even stepped in to cover the financing gap caused by the United States' recent withdrawal of its aid to Palestinians. Financial resources allocated to Palestine have also dropped as other regional needs and priorities emerged, such as the flow of refugees to Western countries, particularly to Europe. In addition, the political and security situations and internal wars resulting in humanitarian crises in some neighboring countries, such as Yemen, Syria, Iraq, Somalia, and Libya, as well as Afghanistan and several African countries, the climate crisis, and others, have all contributed to a decrease in funding for Palestine. The decline in available international funds has reduced opportunities for NGOs to acquire support in an environment where most funding has become conditional.

As the Palestinian government's fiscal crisis deepens, it is expected that most of the foreign assistance would be redirected to support the government budget to prevent the Authority from collapsing. The result will be that incoming funds allocated to NGOs will be further reduced. Similarly, the deterioration of the economic situation may lead to a decrease in the local private sector's financial support to NGOs.

The Coronavirus pandemic and the increase in its economic repercussions, especially considering that all countries, including the wealthiest, were among the most affected, will force countries to devote the bulk of their resources to combating the disease and mitigating its social and economic effects, thus further diverting resources away from the NGO sector in Palestine. Funding that may be available for Palestinian NGOs will be less stable, limiting the ability of organizations to plan, develop strategies, and make decisions regarding their programs and initiatives over the medium and long term, particularly those related to the their institutional continuity and financial sustainability.

3.2 Internal Environment: Strengths and Weaknesses

Since its establishment, NDC has become one of the most prominent NGOs focused on the development of the Palestinian NGO sector through three main areas: grant making, NGO sector development, and capacity building, all of which aim to increase the effectiveness of the sector, and to improve and enhance its self-reliance and sustainability. The following is a brief analysis of NDC's internal environment, highlighting the main factors that will influence its work over the coming years:

18. The Palestinian Cabinet session No. 123.

19. "Arab grants for Palestine's budget fall by 85% in 2020," Anatolia Agency, publishing date 03/03/2021.

Strengths

1. NDC is a unique national Palestinian organization. It is the first professional institution of its kind established and led by Palestinians, whose focus is on providing support to NGOs and contributing to the development of the NGO sector as a whole.
2. NDC has earned itself a good reputation and credibility, and is well-known for its professionalism amongst NGOs, public and private institutions, and donors alike, as well as among Palestinians in general.
3. NDC possesses significant experience in the field of NGO work, in managing diverse and specialized grants, managing and implementing capacity building programs, managing large programs, as well as in launching new initiatives such as the "Code of Conduct" and the "Massader" portal.
4. NDC has the ability to operate in all parts of Palestinian Territory (Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip) due to its experience and knowledge about the NGO sector and its various institutions.
5. NDC has well-developed and transparent governance and administrative structures run by an efficient and effective board of directors comprised of renowned civil society experts, as well as representatives of umbrella unions and networks, the private sector, and academics. NDC also has clear and transparent internal administrative and financial systems, regulations and procedures that comply with international standards.
6. NDC has a wide pool of international partners (donors) including the World Bank, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, the French Development Agency, Germany, the European Commission Office for Technical Assistance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (EC), the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, and others.
7. NDC has a committed, qualified, and dedicated team that believes in and is committed to NDC's values and principles and is attentive to the community's needs and interests. NDC is also characterized by a distinguished work environment and good relations between male and female staff.
8. The NDC is a dynamic, flexible, and learning organization. It is constantly evolving and learning. It works continuously to establish transparent and credible systems and procedures, drawing on its growing experiences and expertise. It is responsive to the evolving needs and priorities of the community and is in line with donors' requirements. This is particularly evident in NDC's ability to function and cope with the problems emerging from the present situation in Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip, as well as with the situation arising from the Coronavirus pandemic.

Weaknesses

At the same time, NDC faces some internal challenges (weaknesses) that must be addressed, such as:

1. NDC's image does not adequately reflect its work or accomplishments: It needs to make greater efforts to present itself in a more visible manner and to inform the relevant parties of its activities and successes, which necessitates the formulation of an effective media plan.
2. The limited number of general assembly members does not allow for appropriate rotation for the Board of Directors according to NDC's internal rules and procedures.
3. NDC's Management Information Systems need to be updated and further developed to become more comprehensive and effective such as the electronic archiving system, the Donor Management Information System - DMIS, and the review and development of the Palestinian portal "Massader."
4. Some of NDC's staff related issues require review and update, such as the salary scale and the incentives package and procedures, as well as job descriptions of some positions and their compatibility with the requirements of new programs.

3.3 External Environment: Opportunities and Threats

The present external conditions provide new opportunities for NDC, but they also pose a number of threats and challenges:

Opportunities

1. NGOs continue to play a role in providing services: Given the prevailing health, political, economic, and social conditions, there is still a great demand for basic services, which public sector institutions alone cannot meet. There will always be a need for the services provided by NGOs, which rely on external funding to carry out their work. Thus, this represents an opportunity for NDC to establish itself as the most important Palestinian institution providing financial and technical support to them.
2. The emergence of semi-institutional models in the form of community initiatives, particularly among youth and women, have become a significant component in society, working in a variety of fields, including health, agriculture, environment, economy, culture, politics, and legal issues. This provides a new opportunity for NDC to expand its programs in a manner that is responsive to the nature and priorities of these initiatives.
3. The interest of various donors in supporting the NGO sector through NDC as an existing and continuous mechanism: The successes achieved by NDC, its professionalism, and the legacy it has accumulated over the years have made it a trusted and credible organization among donors and allows it to continue providing financial and technical support to Palestinian NGOs.
4. The rapid development of technology and communication offers new horizons for work for NDC: whether in automating its processes, enabling and expediting communication, or exchanging expertise and information internally and with

partners. Innovative modes of communication open the way to attract members to General Assembly from all parts of Palestine and abroad.

5. The work of NDC is in harmony with international development trends represented by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and with the National Policy Agenda of the Palestinian Government, which would enhance further political support for NDC's work.

Threats and Challenges

NDC operates in an unstable political, economic, and health environment, which exposes it to a number of challenges and/or threats, primarily:

1. The high level of uncertainty associated with the current health, political, and economic conditions present new challenges for medium- and long-term program planning and budgeting.
2. The occupation, its measures, and its obstruction of Palestinian development and institutional work, particularly in Jerusalem and Area C.
3. The siege imposed on the Gaza Strip, the successive wars on it, the ensuing damage to infrastructure, the economy, and institutional structures, and the resulting unprecedented growth in poverty and unemployment levels.
4. The continuation of the political and administrative division between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, the political polarization, and the increasing tension and internal violence, may require the implementation of relief programs at the expense of development ones.
5. As a result of the global economic crisis that coincided with the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic, complexities and funding conditions increased, until most international financing has become "conditional".
6. The fluctuating relationship between civil society organizations and the Government, particularly in recent years, and the competition between them over funding sources.
7. Some roles overlapping between NDC and the umbrella networks and unions.
8. Some international NGOs compete financially and programmatically with Palestinian NGOs, including NDC.

3.4 Strategic Issues

Based on an analysis of the context and the prevailing internal and external environment, NDC shall focus its efforts in the coming five years on addressing the following interrelated core strategic issues:

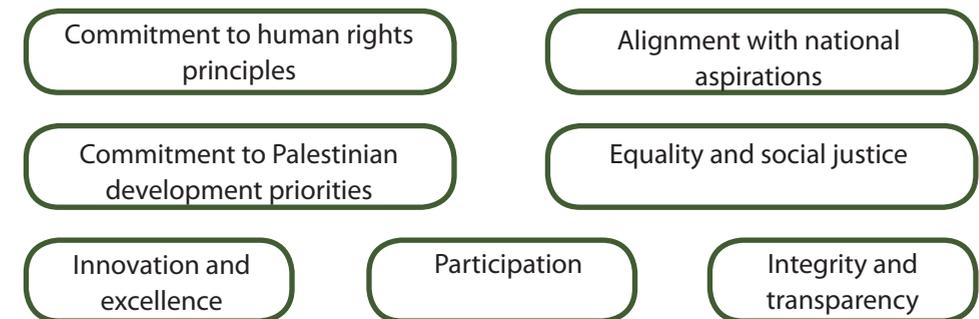
1. The Center's financial sustainability, including:
 - Diversity of funding sources and amounts.
 - Effectiveness of resource mobilization.

- Managing different funding conditions.
 - Relationships with existing donors and attracting new ones.
 - Self-financing.
 - The possibility of private sector financing/sponsoring activities and programs.
2. The grant programs are flexible and sensitive to changing requirements and priorities in terms of:
- Eligibility requirements for applying for various grants.
 - Diversity of grant programs in terms of value and targeting, particularly those aiming at alleviating poverty and unemployment and providing services to marginalized and underserved groups and areas.
 - Improving the living conditions in the Gaza Strip.
 - Grants that contribute to the growth and development of small NGOs.
 - Grant programs that strengthen the presence of Palestinians and their institutions in Jerusalem, especially youth organizations and human rights institutions.
 - Supporting grant programs for various community-based initiatives, especially for youth and women.
3. Adaptation of the NDC's institutional framework to internal and external developments and changes, including:
- NDC's governance structure, the membership of the General Assembly, and the effectiveness of the Board of Directors.
 - NDC's administrative and financial manuals.
 - Archiving and information systems.
 - Human resources and staff effectiveness.
 - Relationships between NDC and its partners (NGOs and their networks, public sector institutions, the private sector, universities, and academic institutions, and with the donor community).
 - NDC's presence in the media.
4. Governance of the civil sector, including:
- Activating / reviving the code of conduct.
 - The relationship between NDC and Palestinian networks and unions.
 - Partnership and coordination between NGOs and the Palestinian Government.
 - Updating the "Masader" portal to become more interactive.

4. NDC's Values, Vision and Mission

4.1 NDC's Value System

The nature of NDC, its ultimate aim, composition, management style, and the scope and content of its programs are all derived from and founded on the following set of values and principles:



4.2 NDC's Vision

Based on NDC's accumulated experiences, its assessment of the internal and external conditions that affect its work, and in line with its value system and beliefs, the vision (i.e. ultimate result) that NDC strives to achieve has been reviewed and amended to read:

"An independent Palestinian NGO sector that is resilient, dynamic, effective, and responsive to react efficiently to emerging challenges"

4.3 NDC's Mission

Based on its values, vision, aspirations, and scope of work, NDC's mission has been updated as follows:

"The NGO Development Center (NDC) is a Palestinian non-profit organization that supports the NGO sector in Palestine through the provision of financial and technical support."

5. Goal and Objectives

To address the identified strategic issues and in line with its mission, over the coming years NDC will work to achieve the following goal and strategic objectives towards realizing its vision:

Goal

NGOs contribute to the development of Palestinian society and meet its needs.

Strategic objectives

During the next five years, NDC will work to achieve the following strategic objectives:

1. NDC is a main mechanism for supporting and developing NGOs to respond to the community's most pressing needs.
2. NGOs are better able to carry out their tasks effectively.
3. Sufficient and suitable resources that are responsive to the NGO sector which cultivates best practices, enhances its performance, and increases its impact.

6. Strategy and Strategic Directions

6.1 Strategy

NDC shall pursue a Broad Differentiation Strategy in order to achieve its intended goal and strategic objectives. This general strategy consists of two main components; differentiation and broad coverage.

1. Differentiation

Since its inception, NDC has distinguished itself from other NGOs by focusing on supporting and strengthening the NGO sector through three interrelated and complementary tracks: grant-making, sector development, and capacity building. These aim to improve the performance of NGOs and the quality of the services they provide, in addition to enhancing their self-reliance and sustainability. These three tracks aim to develop the NGOs sector as a whole and improve its overall capacity to become more transparent and accountable to society, and more responsive to the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized Palestinians.

However, the fact that NDC is the leading organization in this field does not guarantee that it will remain as such forever. Hence, NDC will continue to differentiate itself by continuing to uphold the highest standards of performance and professionalism, as well as by attracting and cultivating the best staff. It is also essential that NDC reviews its objectives, systems, and procedures on a regular basis, in order to ensure their effectiveness and suitability to the various developments. At the same time, it is vital to preserve and expand the distinction of its three program tracks.

2. Broad Coverage

Due to the number of active and influential bodies in the NGO sector and the variety of initiatives implemented by its institutions, NDC's programs must be designed in a manner that is compatible with this plurality and responsive to the diversity of needs and specializations, so that everyone has the opportunity to benefit from NDC's work. NDC, for instance, offers several packages of financial and technical support, each targeting a specific group of organizations based on size/level (like newly established, small, medium, large, community initiatives), specialization, and/or geographic location, especially in marginalized and hard to reach areas. In a similar manner, the design of the sector development program should be sufficiently flexible to ensure that it can respond quickly to arising priorities and keep pace with the sector in a suitable and effective manner.

This broad differentiation strategy requires a strong media strategy that presents and reinforces the unique characteristics of NDC, promotes its values and directions, and publicizes its programs, activities, achievements, success stories, etc.

6.2 Strategic Directions

Based on the accumulated experience, and taking the prevailing conditions into account, NDC will focus its efforts in the coming five years according to the following strategic directions (operational policies) in order to realize its goal and achieve its desired strategic objectives, provided that they are reviewed periodically and modified as necessary:

1. Increasing the General Assembly's membership, through opening up membership opportunities to new active and influential community members locally and from abroad, as well as activating the members' role.
2. Developing and making available information related to the NGO sector by carrying out specialized research and studies on the sector and its issues, needs, and challenges, and preparing the strategic framework for the sector. In addition to creating platforms for coordination and consultation, for the dissemination and exchange of knowledge and experiences, including dialogue sessions and conferences, as well as the continuous updating of the "Massader" portal.
3. Developing and strengthening the relationship between NDC and the umbrella networks and unions.
4. Contributing to the modernization of the regulations and laws governing NGOs' work and to the strengthening of the relationship between NGOs with public, and private sectors.
5. Providing various grant programs that are responsive to the needs of different NGOs (including program grants, small grants, core funding, grants for community initiatives, emergency grants to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic, and others) in order to assist them in providing services in various sectors.
6. Building the capacity of NGOs, enhancing their performance and services, and providing specialized technical assistance programs integrated with the grants awarded to them.
7. Reviewing, updating and activating the Code of Conduct compliance system.
8. Updating and developing NDC's media plan and enhancing NDC's presence in the media.
9. Developing funding sources and enhancing NDC's financial stability.
10. Periodically reviewing and updating the financial, administrative, and operational policies, procedures, and manuals.
11. Keeping up with technology advancements and automating NDC's work in a way that is suitable to its needs.

7. Results Framework

In line with the aforementioned strategy, the following results framework provides the basis for the development of rolling medium-term implementation and budgeting targets and annual plans for the various programs and units within NDC, which will be reviewed and updated annually.

Goal: NGOs contribute to the development of Palestinian society and meet its needs.

Strategic Objective 1: NDC is a main mechanism for supporting and developing NGOs to respond to the community's most pressing needs.

Result 1.1: A grant system that is flexible and responsive to the needs of NGOs and society.

Result 1.2: Suitable institutional structure with updated regulations and manuals and qualified staff.

Result 1.3: Media presence and continuous communication with development partners.

Result 1.4: Diversified and sufficient funding sources and from several donors.

Result 1.5: Good and effective governance.

Strategic Objective 2: NGOs are better able to carry out their tasks effectively.

Result 2.1: Technical support programs are responsive to the needs of NGOs.

Result 2.2: Funding that contributes to the achievement of NGO objectives and priorities is available.

Result 2.3: Suitable resources and best practices are available to NGOs.

Strategic Objective 3: Sufficient and suitable resources that are responsive to the NGO sector which cultivates best practices, enhances its performance, and increases its impact.

Result 3.1: Up-to-date information pertinent to the NGOs sector is available.

Result 3.2: NGOs have adopted the principles of the updated Code of Conduct.

Result 3.3: Effective partnerships between NDC and the representative NGO umbrella networks and unions.

8. Sustainability of NDC

The sustainability of NDC is related to its ability to “continue its operations and services” in line with its vision and mission. It is, however, more complex than that, as the various factors that would ensure NDC’s sustainability must be identified. These factors can be grouped under five interrelated and interdependent headings, namely financial, behavioral, institutional, environmental, and policy.

1. Financial sustainability:

Securing sufficient financial resources is the most important factor for NDC to sustain its efforts and ensure its continued growth. Since it has no financial resources or income of its own, it is always dependent on external (donor) sources to finance its operations. It must work intensely to mobilize sufficient funding to finance its current and future operations.

2. Behavioral sustainability:

This pertains to the ability and the likelihood of staff to continue applying acquired skills and experience which requires a conducive work environment that enables them to improve their performance and thus increase NDC’s effectiveness.

3. Institutional sustainability:

Institutional sustainability refers to the availability of internal administrative and organizational structures, procedures, and tools that enable NDC to continue performing its functions and maintaining the effective implementation of its work, as well as allowing it to grow and adapt effectively to changing conditions and needs.

4. Environmental sustainability:

A. Sustainability of the social environment

This relates to NDC’s ability to establish credibility and acceptance within the community. This issue is directly related to its capacity to produce high-quality outputs, as well as the extent to which it responds to the needs and priorities of NGOs and the Palestinian community. Despite the high level of trust and credibility earned by the NDC among Palestinian institutions and donors, as well as its solid working relationships with many of them, there is still a portion of Palestinians (individuals and institutions) who are not fully aware of NDC or its work. Its ability to expand its footprint and reach to a broader audience, especially at the local level, is essential to ensuring its sustained legitimacy. This is also connected to its capacity to increase acceptance within Palestinian NGOs,

as well as to maintain close dialogue and information-sharing with them in order to reduce any perception of duplication or competition.

B. Sustainability of the green environment

These relate to the measures taken by NDC to ensure the protection and improvement of the green environment, as well as balancing the relationships between human interventions and the natural systems on which they rely in a manner that ensures an adequate level of sustainability for all the various environmental components. In this regard, NDC has incorporated “environmental and social safeguards” into the grant application forms submitted by beneficiary organizations.

5. Policy sustainability:

Includes the extent to which NDC’s policies and practice are compatible and consistent with national policies and Palestinian development priorities, as well as with international trends, standards, regulations, and treaties, especially the Sustainable Development Goals and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Table 1 presents which sustainability elements are available at NDC, the elements that should be focused on and developed further.

Table 1: Sustainability Elements

Sustainability Elements Available	Sustainability Elements to Focus on and Develop
1. Financial sustainability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good relationships with donors • Accumulated experience in resource mobilization • Accumulated experience in managing funds efficiently • Some experience in providing consulting services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing rolling medium-term targets and financial frameworks • Activating a management information system for fundraising and donor management (Donor Management Information System - DMIS) • Maintaining an adequate number of diverse funding sources • Self-financing and establishing a special ‘fund’ for NDC • Encouraging the private sector to finance/ sponsor activities and programs
2. Behavioural sustainability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous employee training • Internal financial and administrative regulations and procedures • Systems for staff performance evaluation and incentives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing a plan for human resource development • Provide sufficient financial coverage for staff development

Sustainability Elements Available	Sustainability Elements to Focus on and Develop
3. Institutional sustainability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The presence of members of the General Assembly since NDC's establishment Manuals for financial management, administration, and procurement Reasonable infrastructure "Massader" portal Project Management Information System (PMIS) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expanding the membership of the General Assembly Updating the financial and administrative manuals regularly Regular updating of hardware and software Continuously updating and developing the archiving system
4. Environmental sustainability	
<p>A. Sustainability of the social environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> NDC established based on broad consultations with relevant parties High quality of NDC's services Old communication and outreach plan Documenting success stories Complaints system for beneficiary institutions and individuals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updating the Communication & Outreach Plan Increasing public relations and media outreach Reviewing and developing relationships with partners
<p>B. Sustainability of the green environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring environmental and social safeguards are a condition for grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring the extent to which the beneficiary institutions adhere to environmental and social safeguards during implementation Preparing an environmental policy document for NDC
5. Policy sustainability	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conducive and flexible policies Adopting NDC's directions, policies, and work methods by other institutions Clear NGO laws and bylaws NDC's interventions are consistent with international norms, standards, regulations, and treaties, especially the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and with national policy directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addressing negative competition within the NGO sector Contribute to updating and development of the NGO Law of Associations as well as the law for Nonprofit Organizations

9. Risk Management

The current situation depends to a large extent on the health, political, social, and economic conditions, and is open to many possibilities both positive and negative. The main potential risks, their likelihood of occurrence, and the assessment of potential impact are shown in Table 2. In addition, the table presents a set of measures to mitigate these risks. The risks will be continuously monitored, and the framework will be adjusted if major changes or new issues develop.

Table 2: Risk Management Framework

Potential Risks	Likelihood of Occurrence	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures
1. Successive waves of the Corona Pandemic	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delays in the implementation of projects Further deterioration of the economic situation Increasing poverty 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extension of the projects' duration Online training Reprogram or prioritize
2. Increasing Israeli control over Area C, the Jordan Valley, and Jerusalem	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obstructing the implementation of projects Destruction of previously implemented projects Donors' reluctance to fund some projects in order not to get in conflict with Israel or affect its interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement simple projects that do not require permissions Strengthening the role of human rights institutions
3. Continued deterioration of the economy and increasing poverty	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus on relief rather than development (turning part of development efforts into relief) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing and implementing responsive relief programs Developing a contingency plan Connecting relief programs with development

Potential Risks	Likelihood of Occurance	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures
4. Israeli obstacles and pressures on Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More difficult and more costly for Jerusalem-based institutions to operate (municipal taxes, high rental costs, etc.) • Difficulties in the transfer of grants to institutions • Migration of Institutions from Jerusalem to the West Bank 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase funding for human rights institutions • Flexibility in procedures such as opening alternative bank accounts in the West Bank for Jerusalem-based organizations • Recruiting staff that can access all areas including Jerusalem
5. Political instability, including the continuation of the division between the West Bank and Gaza, the recurring wars on Gaza, the tightening of restrictions on Jerusalem and areas Area C and areas behind the wall	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterioration of social situation • Increasing poverty • Arising of new needs • Deepening the administrative gap between the West Bank and Gaza • Increased alienation of Jerusalemites within the wall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NDC has a full-fledged office in Gaza • Continuously monitor the political situation and update risk mitigation measures • Recruiting staff that can access all areas including Jerusalem
6. Limiting the activities of NGOs by government agencies and interfering in their work	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased bureaucracy and interference in the work and plans of institutions • Delays in work completion, particularly the difficulty of getting licenses for new organizations • Government agencies attempt to influence the priorities, funding, and strategies of NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging continuous dialogue between NGOs and the Government • Stimulating and activating the role of networks to exert pressure on the Government • Stimulating the effective participation of NGOs in the development of national and sectoral plans

Potential Risks	Likelihood of Occurance	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures
7. Conditional funding	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline in available funding • Some organizations do not accept conditional funding • Strained relationship between institutions • Challenges and obstacles in cooperation between NDC and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing the role of networks and institutions in exerting pressure on donors • Demanding the Authority to engage in discussions with donors and exert pressure on them to reduce and eliminate conditions
8. Fluctuation in the relationship between NDC and the networks	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delays in the implementation of the NGO sector development programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective dialogue with networks • Members of NDC's BOD should not be decision-makers in the networks • Review NDC's internal bylaws
9. Decrease in funding opportunities	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some programs are closed or reduced • Reduction in staff compensation • Increased competition among the NGOs for financing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking alternative and diverse funding sources
10. Data loss	Weak	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work disruptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloud storage • Enhancing the security of the databases, including accounting data

10. Monitoring and Evaluation

Table 3 below outlines a general results-based monitoring and evaluation framework that would enable NDC to systematically track the implementation of the strategic plan and the results achieved, as well as monitor and evaluate progress at the strategic objectives level. Further, the framework will provide information and feedback on the Plan's progress, which in turn shall improve performance and enhance accountability and transparency. The generated data and information will be a source of knowledge capital for both NDC and its partners. In addition to enhancing NDC's efficiency and effectiveness, the outputs of the monitoring and evaluation system constitute one of the main inputs to NDC's media and promotional activities.

Table 3: Follow-up and Evaluation Framework

Results Chain	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Goal NGOs contribute to the development of Palestinian society and meet its needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent NGO participate in the formulation of national and sectoral plans and policies and their effectiveness The extent to which the interventions of NGOs are consistent with the community's developmental needs and priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final evaluation report of the strategic plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs priorities are in harmony with the community needs Internal political conditions allow the NDC to operate in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip

Results Chain	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Strategic Objective 1: NDC is a main mechanism for supporting and developing NGOs to respond to the community's most pressing needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Satisfaction of NGOs with NDCs services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Periodic reports submitted by beneficiary NGOs to NDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs accept NDC as a main mechanism to support the NGOsector Sufficient and secured funds are available Roles are respected at all governance levels Donors are interested to fund the work of NDC
Result 1.1: A grant system that is flexible and responsive to the needs of NGOs and society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of grants offered The volume of grants awarded in each type, classified according to development sector and geographical location. Number of beneficiary institutions, classified according to their type (new, small, medium, and large), and the development sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant agreement records 	
Result 1.2: Suitable institutional structure with updated regulations and manuals and qualified staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appropriateness of NDC's policies, manuals, and internal regulations for its operations Increase in staff efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual self-assessment of NDC Review of internal policies, manuals, and regulations every two years (through an internal workshop) External Auditor's Reports Internal Auditor Reports Annual staff performance evaluation 	

Results Chain	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Result 1.3: Media presence and continuous communication with development partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quantity of news (written, broadcasted, and/or online) that highlight NDC's role and accomplishments. The amount and type of media materials published by NDC Number of invitations received by NDC to participate in conferences, meetings and events related to the NGO sector and various development issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continuous monitoring of mainstream media Internal NDC reports Incoming mail records 	
Result 1.4 : Diversified and sufficient funding sources and from several donors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of donors Quantity and type of funding sources Amount of funding received from each source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual financial reports 	
Result 1.5: Good and effective governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which roles are respected at various levels of management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Auditor Report 	
Strategic Objective 2: NGOs are better able to carry out their tasks effectively	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The degree of performance and quality of services provided by NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Self-assessment of NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGOs accept internal institutional change Funding is available for NGOs to develop their capacities Resources are effectively used by NGOs to implement their priorities and achieve their objectives
Result 2.1: Technical support programs are responsive to the needs of NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of satisfaction among NGOs receiving technical assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual satisfaction survey of NGOs receiving assistance from the technical support program 	

Results Chain	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Result 2.2: Funding that contributes to the achievement of NGO objectives and priorities is available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Types of grants offered The volume of grants awarded in each type, categorized by the development sector Number of beneficiary institutions, their categories (new, small, medium, and large), and development sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant agreement records 	
Result 2.3: Suitable resources and best practices are available to NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent to which NGOs use the resources and best practices that have been provided by NDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A mid-term and final evaluation of the strategic plan 	
Strategic Objective 3: Sufficient and suitable resources that are responsive to the NGO sector which cultivates best practices, enhances its performance, and increases its impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The extent and forms of cooperation and coordination between NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NGO Assessment study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable environment that facilitates the work of NGOs is available NGOs are willing to cooperate and coordinate among themselves Network representatives and NGOs participate in developing best practices and adhere to them NGOs are interested to work jointly in a complementary manner Mutual respect for the roles of networks and their members Funds are available for conducting studies and research

Results Chain	Indicators	Means of Verification	Assumptions
Result 3.1: Up-to-date information pertinent to the NGOs sector is available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A comprehensive study on the situation of the NGO sector in Palestine Studies and research conducted by NDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewing NDC's internal reports 	
Result 3.2: NGOs have adopted the principles of the updated Code of Conduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of NGOs that adhere to the Code of Conduct 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verification reports for signatory NGOs' self-assessment of their compliance with Code of Conduct Code of Conduct reports 	
Result 3.3: Effective partnerships between NDC and the representative umbrella networks and unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The degree that umbrella networks are satisfied with their partnership with NDC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment meetings between NDC and network representatives Internal reports 	

Annex 1 – Strategic Plan Development Team

NDC Board of Directors	NDC Staff Members
Zahi Khouri – Board Chair	Ghassan Kasabreh – Director
Abdel-Karim Ashour – Deputy Chair	Ala'a Ghalayini - Gaza Program Manager
Mohammad Hassasneh – Treasurer	Hazem Quneibi – Finance Manager
Dr. Suleiman Al-Khalil – Secretary General	Rawan Abed Alqader
Mohammad Fahmi Al Shalaldeh – Member	Hasan Hamarsha
Mohammad Munther Al - Rayyes – Member	Laila Shweiki
Dr. Sa'ed Ghoul – Member	Nadia Ghattas
Hiba Tantash – Member	Rudaina Abu Arafeh
Fahmi Siam - Member	Rizek Taha
	Saeb Abd Elnabi
	Randa Mikki
	Munther Abd El-Hadi
	Azhar Besaiso
Khalil Nijim	Strategic Planning Consultant



