
CHF International / West Bank and Gaza

Local Democratic Reform Program (TAWASOL)

تواصل - TAWASOL

Cooperative Agreement # 294-A-00-05-00242-01

Fifth Quarterly Report

October 1, 2006 – December 31, 2006



Advanced Participation Methods Workshop in Preparation for PPWs (TAWASOL - July 2006)

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ACRONYMS & ABBREVIATIONS

ARD	Associates for Rural Development, Inc.
CEP	Center for Engineering and Planning
CHF	Community Habitat Finance International
CoP	Chief of Party
EPLA	Empowering Palestinian Local Authorities program (renamed TAWASOL)
TAWASOL	Local Democratic Reform program
LGU	Local Government Unit
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
TAWASOL	Arabic name for TAWASOL (meaning regular communication between stakeholders)
TWG	Technical Working Group also referred to as a Local Action Committee (LAC)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WBG	West Bank & Gaza

GLOSSARY

Civic Groups	Organizations, institutions or other organized bodies representing citizens and their interests.
Civil Society	The totality of voluntary civic and social organizations and institutions including organizations such as registered charities, non-governmental organizations, community groups, women's organizations, faith-based organizations, professional associations, trade unions, social movements, business associations, coalitions and advocacy groups.
Community	A city, town, village or other populated area, including the local governing authority.
Community Representatives	Individuals, NOT including elected officials, who hold recognized positions of leadership in a particular community and who can represent the needs and concerns of the community or of particular sectors of that community.
Community Stakeholders	Individuals or institutions who have a vested interest in the development of a particular community including but not limited to community leaders, heads of local institutions, investors, citizens.
Eligible LGUs	Those LGUs that are eligible for engagement by TAWASOL given USG policy prohibiting contact or support to the Hamas government or other designated FTOs.
TAWASOL Consortium	The group of institutions working as partners on the implementation of the Local Democratic Reform Program. They are CHF International, ARD, and the Center for Engineering and Planning.
LGU	Local Government Unit, referring to any local level governing authority including municipal councils, village councils or other.
Municipality	Elected local governing body for population centers over 5,000 people.
Tier I LGUs	Under the TAWASOL Two Tier Technical Approach, Tier I LGUs will comprise a Core Group of 15-20 municipalities receiving maximum technical assistance and will qualify to have a combination of capacity building, basic service improvement, and community development projects.
Tier II LGUs	A second group of 15-20 LGUs that are within the same geographic cluster and share similar capacity building needs and priorities with Tier I LGUs, Tier II LGUs will qualify to have capacity building support under TAWASOL.
Village Council	Elected bodies governing population sites between 2,000 and 5,000 people.

Local Democratic Reform Program (TAWASOL)

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FIFTH QUARTERLY FIELD REPORT

October 1, 2006 – December 31, 2006

I. QUARTERLY OVERVIEW

This fifth Quarterly Report for the Local Democratic Reform Program (Tawasol) covers program activities during the period of 1 October, 2006 – 31 December, 2006.

Upon USAID's request and in line with the instructions and draft Program Description (PD) received on 8 September, 2006, CHF prepared and submitted a new 18 month Implementation Plan (IP) on 17 October, 2006. Following several revisions, a final IP was submitted to USAID on 30 October, 2006 that received provisional approval from the mission and a verbal notice to proceed with implementation. The list of potential sites to be targeted by the program submitted to USAID on 17 August, 2006, was reviewed by the mission to ensure the final group selected meets the agreed up criteria between USAID and the Tawasol team. On 8 December 2006, the Mission approved a list of twenty proposed LGUs for Tawasol to start the implementation of program activities in. Tawasol team immediately started conducting initial visits to all approved sites and undertaking a comprehensive mapping process of the LGU and the civil society active in each target community.

A new staffing and program offices restructuring was proposed to the Mission, in line with the revised PD and remaining obligated budget for Tawasol. The proposal received mission approval on 30 October, 2006. These restructuring efforts have been completed during this Quarter and have included a change in the Chief of Party (CoP), downsizing staff and closing the two satellite offices in Nablus and Bethlehem. Similarly, the other consortium partners ARD and CEP were requested to decrease their staff assigned to Tawasol in line with the new draft Program Description. Coordination with the two partners continue to be strong. CEP assigned staff members to the program have been stationed at the Tawasol main office in Ramallah and are fully integrated in the program team.

TAWASOL is now fully operational and field engagement activities are currently underway. Further activities in this Quarter included preparations to begin implementing the new IP, development of the Program Planning Workshop (PPW), carrying out desk study reviews of the local governance sector and the unfolding humanitarian crisis, development of the a preliminary Program Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP), development of promotional materials, meeting with program stakeholders, initial field visits and site mapping and the preparation of a second local governance sector update .

II. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

The following outlines administration and management related progress during this 5th Quarter:

1. Ms. Lana Abu Hijleh has assumed the position of Chief of Party (CoP) to replace the former CoP Mr. Henri Disselkoen.

2. Tawasol developed a plan to restructure the program to be in line with the revised Cooperative Agreement, SOW and budget. This entailed staff downsizing and the closure of the Nablus and Bethlehem satellite offices. All restructuring is now complete.
3. Tareq Zourub has been selected and contracted to assume the position of Local Governance Specialist-Tawasol Gaza Coordinator.
4. Majdi Abu Awwad has been hired as the facilitator of the Participatory Planning Workshops to be conducted with the selected LGUs.

III. PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION STEPS

The following implementation steps have been undertaken in this Quarter:

1. Pre-Engagement Activities

While waiting for USAID review and approval of proposed LGUs, Tawasol worked on pre-engagement activities such as data collection and monitoring of the local governance sector developments. The methods, tools and instruments for the mapping exercise were developed, desk study profiles for each LGU were prepared, and the program Database was built.

The team also worked extensively during the pre-engagement period on the development of the Participatory Planning Workshop methodology, including the development of a detailed facilitation manual and standardization of flip chart texts in English and Arabic.

2. Select Tawasol Target LGUs/Sites

Tawasol prepared and submitted a list of potential LGUs for Tawasol intervention based on agreed upon eligibility criteria with USAID which included but is not limited to: geographic distribution, socio-economic marginalization, other donors support, LGU motivation and partnership potential, moderate leadership of the LGU etc. Subsequently on 8 December, 2006, USAID approved 20 proposed LGUs for targeting; 13 in the West Bank and 7 in Gaza. Following the approval Tawasol began immediately to engage with the target LGUs. The table below lists 20 Tawasol approved sites:

Table 1: TAWASOL Program Sites

Approved LGUs for TAWASOL / TAWASOL					
	LGU	DISTRICT	Initial visit	Mapping	Planning Workshop
1	Arrabeh	Jenin	Complete	Complete	
2	Tubas	Tubas	Complete	Complete	
3	Illar	Tulkarm	Planned for Jan. 22 nd		
4	Azzoun	Qalqiliya			
5	Sabastia	Nablus	Planned for Jan. 22 nd		
6	Hares	Salfit			
7	Kifl Hares	Salfit			
8	Deir Istia	Salfit			

9	Marda	Salfit			
10	Bani Zeid	Ramallah	Complete	Complete	
11	Abu Dis	Jerusalem	Complete	Complete	
12	Beit Fajjar	Bethlehem	Complete	Complete	Planned for Jan. 25 th .
13	Al-Thahrieh	Hebron	Complete	Complete	
14	Al Zahra	Gaza	Complete		
15	Al Musader	Gaza	Planned for Jan. 22 nd		
16	Abassan Al Jadideh	Gaza	Planned for Jan. 22 nd		
17	Wadi Gaza	Gaza	Planned for Jan. 22 nd		
18	Qarara	Gaza	Complete	Complete	
19	Abessan Kabira	Gaza	Complete	Complete	
20	Rafah*	Rafah			

* The type and level of Tawasol intervention in Rafah will be determined following in depth investigation by the team due to the special status of Rafah (large size LGU, not elected council, substantial investments by other donors, previous and ongoing extensive work on institutional development and capacity building of LGU)

3. Contact LGUs

With official approval on the above program sites, the Tawasol team immediately mobilized to initiate contact with the LGUs and community leadership to discuss the program scope and elicit their interest in participating. TAWASOL's CoP and Deputy CoP began formal visits with the LGUs' Mayors and key municipal staff to introduce the program objectives, methodology and potential activities. Those visited until 31 December 2006¹ are Abu Dees, West Bani Zeid, (which includes two towns Beit Rima and Deir Ghassaneh) and Beit Fajjar in the West Bank and Qarara and Abassan Kabira in the Gaza Strip. The Mayors and municipal staff were met who welcomed the Tawasol program and USAID support to their municipalities and communities and many areas for potential cooperation were discussed in preparation for the planning workshops. The initial meetings are immediately followed by visits of the Tawasol technical team to conduct an initial institutional assessment of the LGU different departments as well as map the civil society groups active in the target community.

4. Conduct Community Mapping Exercise

The TAWASOL team began the community mapping exercise, building on the preliminary desk study, in those LGUs in which initial contact was made. By the end of this quarter, mapping has been completed in 4 LGUs (Abu Dees, Beni Zeid, Qarara and Abassan Kabira) is underway in the 2 LGUs of Arrabeh and Beit Fajjar (see Table 1 above). A mapping database has been developed by CHF's IT Specialist and is being uploaded as the data is collected.

5. Conduct Participatory Planning Workshops (PPWs) to develop LGU Action Plans

Preparations for the PPWs have been ongoing throughout this quarter. A mock workshop was carried out for the TAWASOL team on 11 December, 2006. This mock

¹ The visits schedule was interrupted after the third week of December due to the national holidays (Christmas and Al-Adha feast) and the deterioration in the internal security situation due to the up scaling in clashes between the Palestinian factions.

workshop allowed the team to provide input and to assist in refining the techniques and material prior to starting with the LGUs. It further assisted the team to get a better understanding of how the PPWs will lay the foundation for TAWASOL activities in each of the targeted LGUs. The first PPW is expected to take place in Beit Fajjar in mid-end January, 2007.

6. Sign Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)

No MOUs have been signed at this stage.

7. Technical Working Groups

No TWGs have been developed.

8. Technical Assistance and Community/Service Improvement Projects

No TA or Community Projects implemented at this stage.

IV. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: Enabling Environment & "National Level"

This Activity shall not be implemented at this time. Proceeding with its elements requires the written approval of the Agreement Officer.

ACTIVITY 2: Strengthen the Capacity of LGUs to Provide Basic Services

The TAWASOL team has been working on initial field visits to the 20 targeted LGUs and on the on site mapping activity. Preparations are underway for the first PPW which is expected to take place in mid-end January after which one workshop a week will be the target for the remaining LGUs.

ACTIVITY 3: Civil Society Participation and Oversight

This activity will begin with the first PPW in January and will build on the LG Action Plans that will be developed through this process. No activities can be reported at this stage.

ACTIVITY 4: Ongoing Assessment of Local Governance Trends:

The TAWASOL program will conduct regular in-depth analysis of local governance as a sector to highlight trends and challenges. The following has been completed in this Quarter:

- *Local Government Sector Updates:*

The second of the Local Government Sector Updates was submitted to USAID on 18 December, 2006 and can be found in Annex A of this report.

- *“Sentinel” Site Surveys:*

None for this Quarter. This activity will be aligned with selected LGUs and will thus follow initial consultations and startup activities.

- *Special Technical Reports Addressing Key Issues:*

None for this Quarter.

V. COORDINATION AND LEVERAGING

Leveraging with other USAID and Donor Programming (Avoiding Duplication while Maximizing Impact)

The Tawasol Team has met with EDC's RUWWAD project to discuss cooperation opportunities. RUWWAD is awaiting final approval from USAID on their new scope which will incorporate cooperation with CHF Tawasol activities as well as the Food for Work and Food for Training activities implemented in the Jenin District.

Tawasol CoP attended a meeting organized by the mission DG team with the media program team and several potential cooperation areas were discussed during the session to be followed on individually by the different DG partners.

Some donors are remobilizing the provision of support to the Local Governance Sector including the KFW, the Japanese Government mainly through UNDP and the Arab and Islamic funding organizations. Most donors continue to provide direct support to non-restricted municipalities and minimal contact if any with the Ministry of Local Governance. Tawasol continues to monitor donor activities in the sector while working to capture any new developments in the Local Governance Sector Update provided to USAID. Tawasol team is identifying all donors working with the program target LGUs to contact them and ensure leveraging as well as no duplication of efforts.

VI. DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED AND SECURITY ISSUES

The closures and checkpoints, governmental cash flow problems, and political changes are causing increasing social problems especially in Gaza. There is however no need for CHF WBG to take action though we are monitoring the emerging situation. The most security concern regards the escalation in internal violence between rival Palestinian parties that is becoming very dangerous. All staff have been requested to avoid areas of clashes between Hamas and Fateh parties' supporters and not to get involved in the ongoing political debate neither as persons nor as CHF staff members. When the situation in a certain location where we have offices go out of control we usually close the office and send staff home to ensure their security. All our files and data are regularly backed up in case of any unexpected problems.

ANNEX A – LOCAL GOVERNANCE SECTOR UPDATE #2