

**ASSISTANCE TO THE  
PALESTINIAN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

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**EQUIPMENT PURCHASED  
AND OPERATIONAL**

*Submitted to:*

USAID/West Bank and Gaza

*Submitted by:*

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Prepared Under Contract #: 294-C-00-99-00156-00  
Assistance to the Palestinian Legislative Council

**30 September 2000**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

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The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recognized the need for additional assistance to the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) beyond their initial three-year program and awarded a contract to ARD, Inc. to provide implementation. This second three-year project (PLC2) is providing continued support toward the institutional development of this legislative body as well as the law-making capacities of the Diwan al-Fatwa al-Tashrie (the Diwan) of the Executive Branch.

Activities initiated under PLC2 are designed to strengthen the ability of the PLC to draft, review, and approve legislation; to effectively fulfill its mandate to provide oversight of the Executive Branch; to improve constituent relations; and to strengthen internal administration.

Although the procurement of equipment is not a specific focus of this project, it is recognized that in the context of improving efficiency and effectiveness, equipment serves a purpose. Whenever equipment could play a role in accomplishing the results of the project, ARD has moved to proceed with procurement. Equipment has been purchased as needed to support staff in the performance of their general tasks, to enhance communications within the PLC, and to maintain accurate record keeping.

ARD has monitored the usage and retention of equipment by the PLC. We are pleased to report that fully 100 percent of the equipment procured under this project is currently being used for its intended function. This is due in part to the systematic assessment and evaluation of needs performed prior to procurement, as well as the direct linkage of such equipment to other ongoing technical assistance activities.

Areas of equipment support during this first year of the project include the PLC offices of Information Technology (IT), Hansard, PLC Chamber, Chief Clerk, Committees, Technical, Procurement and Supplies, Women's Unit, and Training and Development; the Library; and the Drafting Unit and Libraries of the Diwan. Following the narrative text describing the general purpose of equipment procured, tables indicate the specific equipment purchased and operational.

## **II. NARRATIVE DESCRIPTION OF ITEMS PROCURED**

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Procurement during Year 1 of the PLC2 project involved purchases for the PLC in Ramallah and Gaza and for the Diwan al-Fatwa wa al-Tashr'ie.

### **A. Palestinian Legislative Council - General**

#### **Wide Area Network (WAN)**

The procurement and installation of equipment to provide a communications link between the administrative buildings of the Council in Ramallah and Gaza was a priority during the first year of the PLC2 project. The WAN will be used initially to share files over the network and, by the end of the year, email capabilities will be functioning. This provides the Council the capability to improve their internal communications.

### **B. Palestinian Legislative Council – Ramallah**

#### **IT Unit**

This department was in dire need of total refurbishing. ARD assessed that, in addition to updated computers for staff, the office area should be reorganized and outfitted for maximum work efficiency. Office space is at a premium within the Administration Building in Ramallah, and this fact is glaringly evident within the IT area. Customized tables for the servers, a worktable for hardware repair, and storage cabinets all contribute to an organized space that maximizes the room available.

With the additional servers, and upgrading of existing servers, the PLC is now able to divide the system workload and is positioned for enhanced information sharing and for growth of users and the additional demand that will be created. ARD IT staff helped to configure the servers so that there is one for communications (including email), one for hosting the PLC Internet site, and one for file management.

#### **Hansard Unit**

The Hansard Unit is responsible for transcribing the verbatim transcripts from the PLC legislative deliberation sessions. These audio transmissions arrive via microwave from the Chamber to the Administration Building, approximately three miles away. Transcribers then utilize a customized software program to assist in accurate transcriptions. The Unit consists of the Hansard Editor and four trained transcribers. The computer purchased for the Unit provides each staff person with their own workstation.

## **PLC Chamber**

The function of the computer purchased for the Chamber is to control the microphone and sound system for audio within the Chamber as well as for the Hansard audio recording. The slower, old computer will be retained at this location and will be used as a backup for support to this important audio and record-keeping system.

## **Chief Clerk's Office**

Computers for this office were distributed to the Chief Clerk, Committee Coordinator, and three committee clerks. Neither the Chief Clerk nor the Committee Coordinator had computers prior to our procurement. The computers for the committee clerks replace outdated computers. UPSs were purchased to provide power protection for all five workstations. In addition, Passia Directories were purchased for committees to use as a reference tool.

## **Technical Department**

This department did not have computers to facilitate their work. This purchase provides the Technical Manager and the Transportation Manager with computers, a shared printer, and a hub for local area network connection.

## **Library**

Some reference materials were procured for the PLC Library. These have been delivered and are available for use by staff and Members. Additional purchases of books and periodicals are planned over the next two years to expand the legislative process and laws section of the Library.

## **C. Palestinian Legislative Council – Gaza**

### **Procurement and Supplies Department**

ARD worked extensively with this department during the last seven months in providing technical assistance in the development of procedures, manuals, forms, and two databases that establish transparent and standardized procurement and tracking procedures. This department previously had no equipment with which to facilitate their work. ARD equipped the office with computers, a printer, a copier, and filing cabinets.

### **Women's Unit**

This newly established unit had not been provided with equipment. ARD was able to provide computers, printers, a fax machine, and a copier. This procurement provides the unit the tools

with which to meet their objective of improving the legal status of Palestinian women in the political, social, and cultural spheres of Palestinian society.

## **IT Unit**

IT staff in Gaza were using slow computers and ARD's procurement now provides new, fast computers that will allow staff to work more productively. In addition, a communications server and UPS were purchased that will serve as the email, DHCP, and proxy server. A color printer and network printer will be located within the IT Unit, but will be available to relieve the heavy demand from other printers within PLC Gaza. A CD writer was purchased to assist in backup and archiving as well as producing training CDs.

## **Training and Development Unit**

The Training and Development Unit in Gaza has been very active in organizing training sessions for employees. However, whenever a computer class was scheduled, the unit was forced to borrow computers from other Council offices as no permanent computers were available. ARD was able to set up the computer lab with six workstations including tables and chairs.

## **D. Diwan al-Fatwa wa al-Tashr'ie**

### **Drafting Unit**

This unit in Gaza was in need of replacement computers as well as a computer for a new staff member. There were 12 people in this unit sharing one printer; the network printer ARD procured will split this load. In addition, a small color printer was procured for the production of a newsletter, reports, and invitations. With the purchase of a modem, the unit will now be able to communicate more easily with their Ramallah office.

### **Libraries**

The library of the Gaza Office and Ramallah Office of the Diwan received resource materials from the project. Various Arabic-language legal treatises, books on policy issues, and reference materials to be used in conducting legal research and producing draft legislation were procured.



### **III. CURRENT / FUTURE PROCUREMENT**

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ARD is in the process of procuring USAID-approved equipment for the constituent offices. This procurement of approximately \$68,000 will be complete with the bid and tender process by early October 2000. Installation and any necessary training will occur after that time.

It is anticipated that ARD will continue procurement as equipment is identified that would assist the PLC or Diwan in accomplishing their missions and is within the project objectives. These purchases will follow the prescribed rules and regulations of USAID and will be documented in the second "Equipment Purchased and Operational" report to USAID the first quarter of Year 3 of the PLC2 contract.