

ABSTRACT BEIT SAHOUR

Beit Sahour is a town of approximately 13,254 residents and is located one kilometer east of Bethlehem and 10 kilometers south of Jerusalem. Known as the "City of the Shepherds' Fields", the origins of the name Beit Sahour (the house of vigilance) stems from the Canaanite words "Beit" meaning place, and "Sahour" meaning night watch, which reflected the importance of the area for shepherds. The land provided their flocks with good grazing during the day and safety in the numerous caves at night.

Additionally, the area is full of historical and biblical sites of significance. Ruins from Roman, Byzantine, Islamic and Crusader times can be found throughout the area. In addition, there are many sites of special importance to followers of the three monotheistic religions, to whom this land is sacred.

The Beit Sahour Municipality is the administrative body responsible for the provision of basic services to and the welfare of the residents of Beit Sahour.

The municipal administration is comprised of 5 departments: Engineering, Project Development and Public Relations, Accounting, Procurement and Administrative Management with a total of 28 employees. The administrative staff is augmented by 35 sanitation and maintenance employees; making the total number of salaried employees 63.

Our mission: To provide the best possible services to residents and visitors and to actively pursue consistent development with the cooperation of civil society through the proper investment of financial, human and tourism resources in order to gain the trust of residents and visitors.

Our vision: A unique organization known for exceptional service provision to its residents, which comprises progressive development of infrastructure, economy and tourism for the city of Beit Sahour.

Beit Sahour Municipality :

The municipality strives to provide services within the 4 priorities of the strategic plan. Our primary targets include the following:

- City planning and development strategy;
- Public facilities provision and maintenance which includes old home renovation and restoration;
- Infrastructure development and maintenance which includes:
 1. garbage collection and disposal,
 2. public lighting systems,
 3. road, water, and sewage systems;
- Social services particularly in sectors that promote health and youth and gender development;
- Inception and implementation of income generating programs and projects in order to combat high unemployment rates and reduce poverty.

This includes but is not limited to the provision of the following services and responsibilities for:

- Solid waste collection and street cleaning;
- Headquarters for public institutions (the local post office and police department);
- Protection and monitoring of government properties;
- Maintenance of public schools and parks;
- Organization of the construction and licensing process;
- Bill pay for taxes, electricity, and solid waste collection;
- Provision and monitoring of public markets;
- Support and monitoring of local organizations;
- Inspection and monitoring of food staples, butcheries and hotels;
- Inspection and demolition (if required of unsafe building structures);

Problem Analysis and Justification

The Beit Sahour Municipality is the official local government body responsible for a wide number of services and activities dedicated to enhancing the quality of life for all its residents. Our current Institutional Development strategy focuses on the integration and development of administrative, technical, financial and organizational systems. This includes a supporting "checks and balances" system via the implementation of performance indicators.

One of the strengths of Beit Sahour Municipality is its high level of activity and outputs: many projects are implemented throughout the city in many sectors. One of the strengths of the Beit Sahour community is their willingness to participate in and support the various projects. Therefore the municipality prides itself on a close relationship with its residents. However, the mechanism(s) for communication are varied, haphazard, and inconsistent. The "tool" used depends on the staff member in charge of the communication. Furthermore, regardless of which type of media is used for the communication, not all the intended audiences are reached and the turnout is often insufficient.

The key benefits from this project are:

- Establishing a communication mechanism manual that will be used by this municipality, endorsed by the ministries and disseminated to other municipalities.
- Improving the relationship between the municipality and its residents by providing a consistent and precise communication mechanism;
- Providing residents with information regarding the municipality's recent achievements, current projects and future objectives.
- Obtaining inputs for the SDIP from the residents.

Assessing resident satisfaction with municipality services.

The specific objectives of this project are:

1. Increase the community participation and buy-in of the local community in Municipality's decision making process.
2. Develop a communication strategy and mechanism to promote and institutionalize the community participation within the municipality.