



AMAN
Transparency Palestine



Report on:

Report Series No. 322

Independence, and Governance in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council (WSRC)

2026



Report on:

**Independence, and Governance
in the Work of the Water Sector
Regulatory Council (WSRC)**

2026

AMAN
Transparency Palestine



The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN) extends its appreciation to researcher Dr. Kayed Tanbour for preparing this Report, and to Dr. Azmi Sha'aibi and AMAN team for supervising, reviewing and editing this Report.

© All rights reserved to the Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN)

If case of citation, please indicate it as follows:

Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN). 2025. Independence, and Governance in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council (WSRC).

Ramallah, Palestine.

The Coalition for Accountability and Integrity (AMAN) has exerted effort to verify the information contained in this Report and bears no responsibility for the use of the information for purposes outside the context of the Report's objectives after its publication.

This report was prepared with funding from the European Union, and the views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union, which cannot be held responsible for them.



**Funded by
the European Union**

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	5
Objectives of the Report	6
Methodology of the Report	7
First: The Legislative Framework Governing the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council	7
Second: The Institutional Framework of the Water Sector Regulatory Council	9
Third: The State of Independence, and Governance in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council	14
A. The State of Independence in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council	14
B. Integrity Environment in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council	16
C. Publication, Disclosure, and Transparency Policy in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council	17
D. Oversight, Accountability, and Audit Mechanisms in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council	19
Findings and Recommendations	21
Sources and References	26
First: Laws and Decisions	26
Second: Published Reports	26
Third: Websites	26
Fourth: Individual Interviews	27
Annex (1): Analysis Indicators	28

Executive Summary

This report aims to assess the state of independence, effectiveness, integrity, transparency, and accountability in the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council (WSRC) in Palestine, in light of the legal and institutional framework governing its operations, and based on the principles of good governance and the integrity, transparency, and accountability indicators adopted by the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN).

The analysis shows that the Water Sector Regulatory Council enjoys legal, financial, and administrative independence explicitly stipulated under Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water and its amendments. The Council possesses legal personality as well as financial and administrative independence, and exercises its regulatory and oversight powers directly. The distribution of powers between the Council and the Council of Ministers reflects a model based on functional separation, whereby the role of the Council of Ministers is limited to the final approval of water tariffs and prices and the issuance of licenses for regional water utilities, based on reasoned technical and regulatory recommendations issued by the Council, without interference in day-to-day operational or oversight functions.

At the institutional level, the Council has a clear organizational framework for human resource management through legally defined appointment mechanisms, as well as a dedicated administrative and financial system regulating staff affairs, organizational structures, and administrative and financial procedures. The Council also has an independent budget, although it currently relies on donor funding, with a declared direction toward strengthening financial independence through integrating revenues from licensing fees and service charges into its budget starting in 2026.

With regard to the integrity environment, the Council's work is grounded in a legal framework that includes explicit provisions prohibiting conflicts of interest for the Chairperson and members of the Board of Directors, the Chief Executive Officer, and Council staff, in addition to the obligation to submit financial disclosure statements and the existence of an approved code of conduct. However, the absence of a detailed and independent institutional policy for managing conflicts of interest, the lack of systematic mechanisms for assessing corruption risks, the weakness of specialized awareness programs in the field of promoting integrity and combating corruption, and the limited follow-up in reinforcing the understanding and application of the code of conduct, conflict of interest prevention systems, and rules governing the acceptance of gifts, constitute key gaps that limit the transition toward a comprehensive preventive approach to governance.

In the area of transparency, publication, and disclosure, it is noted that the Council publishes administrative and annual reports on its website and has recently published its budget and financial reports in response to relevant recommendations, representing a positive step that reflects institutional responsiveness. However, the absence of publication of regulatory decisions, the lack of disclosure of procurement details, and the absence of a written policy for openness and communication with the public continue to constrain the level of transparency and social accountability.

Regarding the oversight and accountability system, the Council is subject to accountability by its Board of Directors and executive management, in addition to internal audit oversight, as well as external oversight by the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau, the Ministry of Finance, the Council of Ministers, external auditors, and donor entities. No cases of corruption or manipulation have been recorded in the Council's work. However, observations by the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau regarding weak institutional integration and discrepancies in data with the Water Authority, as well as the absence of a unified national database, highlight governance challenges that require attention. It is also noted that there is limited encouragement of social accountability initiatives, while the Council has a documented complaints management system and procedures, reflecting an acceptable level of organization with room for further development.

The report concludes that the Water Sector Regulatory Council possesses solid legal and institutional foundations for independence and effectiveness. However, strengthening governance requires the development of publication and disclosure policies, the activation of preventive integrity tools, the expansion of social accountability, and the enhancement of institutional integration. These measures would contribute to increasing public trust, improving water sector management, and protecting the public interest, in line with the objectives of this report and the orientations of the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN).

Introduction

The water sector is considered one of the most vital and highly sensitive public sectors, given its direct connection to citizens' fundamental rights and to public health, environmental, and social security. The importance of this sector is further heightened in the Palestinian context due to resource scarcity, the multiplicity of stakeholders, and the complexity of the institutional environment. This necessitates the adoption of good governance frameworks based on a clear separation between the roles of policymaking, regulation, oversight, and service provision, while reinforcing the principles of integrity, transparency, and accountability.¹

In line with this approach, the Palestinian government has adopted a model of indirect management in the water sector by assigning policy formulation and strategic planning functions to the Palestinian Water Authority, while establishing an independent regulatory body responsible for regulating and monitoring the performance of water supply and wastewater service providers. This was realized through the establishment of the Water Sector Regulatory Council pursuant to Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014, as an entity with legal personality and financial and administrative independence, entrusted with a central role in regulating the sector, ensuring service quality, and protecting consumer rights.

Given the broad powers vested in the Council, and their direct implications for public financial management, service tariff-setting, licensing, and regulatory decision-making, there is a need to assess the integrity and governance framework governing its work. This includes examining the extent of its independence and neutrality, the effectiveness of oversight and accountability mechanisms applied to entities responsible for delivering water services to consumers, and the degree to which officials and staff of the Council adhere to the values of integrity and the principles of transparency and disclosure in its procedures and decisions.

Accordingly, this report is prepared within the framework of the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN)'s methodology, which aims to diagnose structural and functional corruption risks within public institutions, assess their compliance with the principles of integrity, transparency, and accountability, analyze the existing legislative and institutional frameworks and their impact, and examine the extent to which these frameworks are reflected in actual operational practices within the institutional system. The report ultimately seeks to provide practical and actionable recommendations that contribute to strengthening institutional governance and protecting the public interest in the water sector.

¹ Palestinian Water Authority. (2025). National Water Sector Strategy in Palestine.

Objectives of the Report

General Objective

To verify the implementation of the plan to enhance the transparency of administrative policies, public financial management, governance, and the rule of law as a fundamental pillar of the Palestinian Authority's reform agenda.

To examine the reality of the Water Sector Regulatory Council in order to assess the extent to which it performs its role with effectiveness, independence, and good governance, and to promote the values of integrity, the principles of transparency, and accountability systems in its work. This includes examining the transparency and integrity of the relationship between the Water Sector Regulatory Council, on the one hand, and the Council of Ministers, the Palestinian Water Authority, regional water utilities, and water user associations, on the other, as well as identifying the challenges and issues surrounding these relationships and their impact on governance in the management of the water sector.

Specific Objectives

To assess the state of independence, effectiveness, and neutrality in the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, in addition to evaluating the extent to which integrity values are applied by officials and staff of the Council, the application of transparency principles in work procedures, and the availability and effectiveness of internal and external accountability and oversight systems over the Council's work. This is carried out within the framework of a set of relevant indicators, with the aim of producing recommendations that enhance effectiveness, independence, and governance in the Council's work.

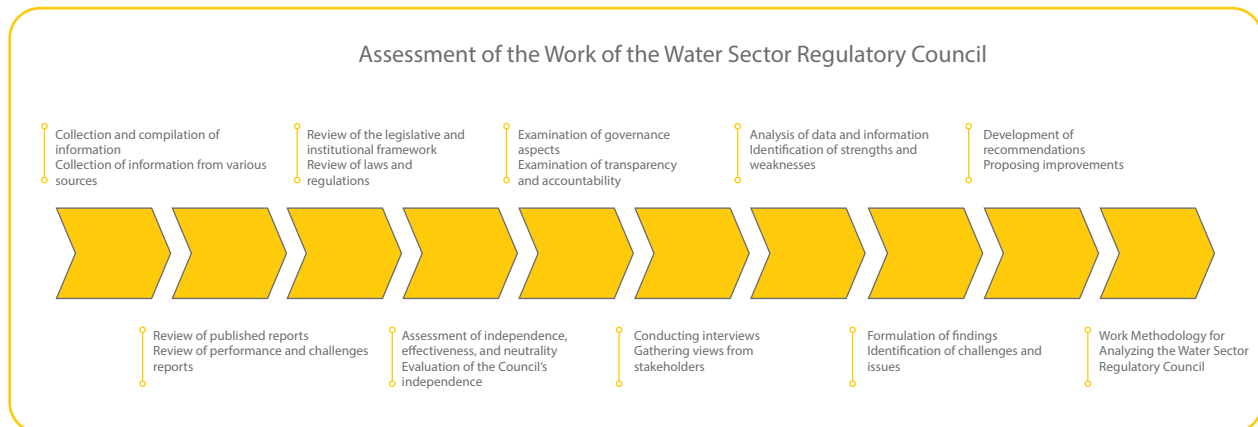
Methodology of the Report

The report adopts a descriptive analytical approach, enabling the assessment of both the legislative and institutional frameworks on the one hand, and actual practices on the other, in terms of providing enabling or constraining factors for managing tasks and procedures with integrity, transparency, and accountability. This, in turn, contributes to strengthening the effectiveness and independence of the Water Sector Regulatory Council and improving its performance.

This approach was implemented through the following steps:

- » Collecting and compiling relevant information from various sources.
- » Reviewing published reports on the subject, particularly those issued by the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN).
- » Reviewing the legislative and institutional framework governing the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council.
- » Assessing the state of independence, effectiveness, and neutrality in the Council's work.
- » Examining governance aspects in the Council's work through a set of relevant indicators.
- » Conducting interviews with relevant stakeholders and experts related to the work of the Council.
- » Analyzing the collected data, information, and indicator results related to the Council.
- » Developing conclusions that highlight the identified challenges and issues.
- » Preparing actionable recommendations and proposing advocacy and pressure mechanisms for their adoption and implementation.
- » Preparing an initial draft of the report, discussing it in a workshop with relevant stakeholders, and refining it based on feedback to produce the final version of the report.

The following figure summarizes these steps:



First: The Legislative Framework Governing the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council

The analysis of the legislative and institutional framework governing the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council in Palestine, particularly Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water and its amendments,² and Council of Ministers Decision No. (11) of 2016 on the Administrative Regulation of the Water Sector Regulatory Council,³ demonstrates that the Palestinian legislator has, in principle, adopted the model of an independent regulatory authority. The Council has been granted legal personality as well as financial and administrative independence, in line with the requirements of good governance in the regulation of public utilities.

At the level of institutional independence, Article (21) of the Palestinian Water Law No. (14) of 2014 addresses

² Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water (Official Gazette No. 108, 15 July 2014). Ministry of Justice - Legislation Department.

³ Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water (Official Gazette No. 108, 15 July 2014). Ministry of Justice - Legislation Department.

the provisions governing the formation of the Board of Directors of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, including the number of its members, the mechanism for their appointment, membership conditions, term of office, and the financial entitlements and remuneration granted to them. This regulatory framework has contributed to establishing a clear legal basis for the Council's senior administrative structure, through setting a defined term of office renewable once, and specifying cases of termination of membership. This, in principle, enhances institutional stability and reduces administrative uncertainty.

However, assessing the extent to which actual independence is achieved remains contingent upon the nature of the controls governing appointment and dismissal procedures, and the extent to which the discretionary powers of the executive authority are constrained by objective criteria and transparent procedures. Accordingly, while the aforementioned provision establishes a formally structured institutional framework, evaluating its adequacy in ensuring genuine independence requires comprehensive reading of related legal provisions as well as an assessment of their practical implementation within the broader institutional environment.

Based on the provisions of the Palestinian Water Law No. (14) of 2014, the indicators of legal independence of the Water Sector Regulatory Council can be identified through a set of normative elements stipulated in the governing legislative framework. These include the Council's legal personality and financial and administrative independence; the determination of the number of Board members and their appointment by a decision of the Head of State based on a nomination by the Council of Ministers; the requirement of legal criteria for membership related to eligibility and integrity; the establishment of a fixed term of office renewable once; the exhaustive specification of cases for termination of membership; and the regulation of financial entitlements through a system issued by the Council of Ministers. Collectively, these elements constitute the legal foundation for assessing institutional independence by examining the adequacy of safeguards related to appointment procedures, tenure stability, protection against arbitrary dismissal, and financial and administrative independence in exercising regulatory functions.

With regard to the integrity system, the legislative framework includes explicit provisions addressing conflicts of interest. Article (22) of the Decree-Law prohibits conflicts of interest for the Chairperson and members of the Board of Directors, while Article (28) addresses the same issue in relation to the Chief Executive Officer and Council staff. This approach is further reinforced by the Administrative Regulation issued under Council of Ministers Decision No. (11) of 2016, particularly Articles (80, 81, 82, 83), which regulate job-related obligations concerning integrity, avoidance of conflicts of interest, safeguarding of public funds, and adherence to the ethics of public service. This reflects the existence of a foundational normative framework for institutional integrity within the Council.

However, despite their importance, these provisions still lack detailed implementation and oversight mechanisms to ensure their practical effectiveness. They are not complemented by clear procedures for periodic disclosure of interests, mechanisms for verification and follow-up, or the designation of a competent authority responsible for monitoring compliance with conflict of interest provisions. Furthermore, there is limited detail regarding sanctions applicable to violations. This deficiency weakens the preventive nature of the integrity system and often renders compliance a discretionary matter that is difficult to measure and hold accountable.

It is noted that there is no dedicated internal regulation within the Water Sector Regulatory Council for addressing conflicts of interest, nor have any internal committees been established to monitor or enforce conflict of interest prevention principles. As a result, the Council relies on general regulations issued by the Council of Ministers or applicable legislation, without specific mechanisms to ensure the disclosure of personal interests of Board members or staff. This indicates the need for the Council to develop a clear internal governance framework to manage conflicts of interest and enhance transparency in decision-making.

With regard to transparency, the legislative framework, following its amendment, includes a provision supporting this principle. Article (24), paragraph (12), stipulates that one of the functions of the Water Sector Regulatory Council is to establish a database of technical, financial, and statistical information related to the water sector and to publish such information on a periodic basis. This provision represents a positive legislative development reflecting the legislator's recognition of the importance of access to information as a tool for enhancing transparency and supporting public accountability. However, the practical impact of this provision remains contingent upon the extent to which it is complemented by implementing regulations and procedures that define the nature of the information to be published, the frequency of publication, and the mechanisms for access, while ensuring coverage of regulatory decisions, licensing criteria, tariff-setting mechanisms, and the results of performance evaluations of service providers. This would ensure that the legislative obligation is translated into regular, institutionalized, and measurable practices.

With respect to accountability systems, Article (26), particularly paragraph (3), of the Decree-Law on Water stipulates that all accounts of the Water Sector Regulatory Council are subject to oversight by official supervisory bodies. This constitutes an important legislative safeguard for strengthening financial accountability and protecting public funds and establishes a basis for independent external institutional oversight. However, the scope of this accountability, as stipulated in the legal text, remains largely confined to the financial dimension and does not clearly extend to administrative and regulatory accountability based on performance and results. Moreover, financial oversight is not accompanied by provisions obligating the Council to publish audit results or oversight reports, or to make them accessible to the public, which limits the comprehensiveness of the accountability system and confines it within its formal framework without sufficiently enhancing social accountability.

The Water Sector Regulatory Council is subject to the oversight of the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau pursuant to Article (31) of the Law of the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau No. (15) of 2004⁴, which grants the Bureau the authority to oversee “institutions and companies licensed to exploit or manage a public utility”. This oversight covers three main areas: financial oversight, which focuses on reviewing revenues, expenditures, and financial records; administrative oversight, which aims to assess compliance with internal regulations and decision-making procedures; and performance oversight, which evaluates the effectiveness and efficiency of the Council in managing the public utility and achieving its regulatory objectives. This oversight enables the Bureau to access documents and records, conduct audits, and issue observations and recommendations to enhance transparency, accountability, and governance in the sector.

Article (61) of Council of Ministers Decision No. (12) of 2016 on the Financial Regulation of the Water Sector Regulatory Council⁵ provides for the appointment of a financial controller who reports directly to the Council, with the primary responsibility of monitoring financial performance and submitting periodic reports. The financial controller is entrusted with specific duties, including: Prior auditing of all disbursement and accounting transactions prepared by the financial department to ensure compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and instructions; reviewing financial statements, reports, bank reconciliations, and other reports submitted by the financial director; and conducting subsequent audits to process transactions related to the computerized accounting system on the following day, to verify the accuracy of accounting entries and the completion of required approvals. These procedures ensure that the Council’s financial operations are subject to systematic and rigorous oversight, thereby enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in the management of its financial resources.

In conclusion, the analysis indicates that the legislative framework governing the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council in Palestine includes important legal provisions regulating the structure of the Board of Directors, explicit provisions addressing conflicts of interest, and supportive rules for transparency and financial accountability. However, it still requires qualitative development to strengthen the actual independence of regulatory decision-making, to complete the integrity system with clear implementation and oversight mechanisms, to transform transparency and information disclosure obligations into measurable institutional practices, and to expand the concept of accountability to include administrative and regulatory dimensions as well as performance evaluation. This would align with the requirements of good governance and contribute to reducing corruption risks in the water sector.

Second: The Institutional Framework of the Water Sector Regulatory Council

The Water Sector Regulatory Council is the competent regulatory authority responsible for overseeing water and wastewater services in Palestine. It was established pursuant to Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water⁶ and its subsequent amendments, as an entity possessing legal personality and financial and administrative independence. This comes within the broader legislative approach aimed at separating the roles of policymaking, regulation, and service provision, in line with the principles of good governance in the management of public utilities. The establishment of the Council aims to regulate the water sector and ensure the provision of fair, high-quality, and efficient services, in a manner that balances the interests of service providers and the rights of water users, while promoting the financial and technical sustainability of the sector.

According to Article (21) of the Decree-Law, the Board of Directors of the Water Sector Regulatory Council consists of a Chairperson and six members who possess integrity, competence, and relevant expertise, representing the public sector, private sector, and civil society. They are appointed by a decision of the Head of State based on a nomination by the Council of Ministers, and the members elect from among themselves a Vice-Chairperson. The legislator has established clear criteria for membership, including Palestinian nationality

⁴ Law of the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau No. (15) of 2004.

⁵ Council of Ministers Decision No. (12) of 2016 on the Financial Regulation of the Water Sector Regulatory Council.

⁶ Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water (Official Gazette No. 108, 15 July 2014). Ministry of Justice - Legislation Department.

or origin, full legal capacity, and the absence of criminal convictions involving dishonor or breach of trust. This reflects a legislative orientation toward strengthening both personal and institutional integrity in the composition of the Council. The law further stipulates that the term of office of the Chairperson and members is four years, renewable once only, and defines cases of termination of membership. Article (21), paragraph (5), specifies that membership ends for several reasons, including the expiration of the term, resignation, death, loss of legal capacity, or dismissal by a decision of the Council of Ministers. With regard to dismissal, the law does not require that such a decision be reasoned, meaning it may be taken at the discretion of the executive authority without the obligation to provide detailed justification, although sound administrative practice would call for documenting the reasons for dismissal to ensure transparency and accountability. This legal provision allows the Council of Ministers to exercise oversight authority over board members in a manner that ensures alignment with public policies and effective management of the public utility, while taking into account other provisions related to members' rights and termination procedures.

From a governance perspective, these powers raise questions regarding the extent of the Council's actual independence, given the central role of the executive authority in appointment and termination, despite the formal safeguards provided in the legal text.

With respect to executive management, Article (27) provides that the Board of Directors appoints an Executive Director of the Council and determines their salary and financial and employment rights. The Executive Director is the direct head of the executive apparatus, responsible for managing day-to-day operations, preparing the general budget, internal, administrative, and financial regulations, and the organizational structure, as well as submitting periodic reports to the Board of Directors. The Executive Director participates in Board meetings without voting rights, which reinforces the functional separation between the executive and regulatory levels and is intended to promote professionalism and administrative neutrality. Council staff are also subject to a specific administrative system issued by the Council of Ministers based on a nomination by the Board of Directors.

At the level of powers and functions, Article (24), as amended by Decree-Law No. (18) of 2019⁷, expands the regulatory role of the Council. It explicitly assigns it key responsibilities, most notably recommending to the Council of Ministers the approval of water tariffs, connection fees, and other service charges related to the provision of water and wastewater services, as well as reviewing and monitoring them to ensure their consistency with policies adopted by the Palestinian Water Authority. This provision highlights the sensitive role played by the Council in tariff regulation, given its direct implications for social equity, the financial sustainability of service providers, and the protection of consumer rights. This, in turn, necessitates the highest levels of transparency, independence, and accountability in regulatory decision-making.

With regard to institutional relationships, the Water Sector Regulatory Council is linked through a network of functional and regulatory relationships with several official and executive entities directly related to the water sector, most notably the Council of Ministers, the Palestinian Water Authority, regional water utilities, and water user associations.

According to the provisions of Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water and its amendments⁸, the Water Sector Regulatory Council exercises independent regulatory and oversight powers over utilities and water service providers without directly managing these entities. Article (17) provides for the establishment of the Council and grants it legal personality as well as financial and administrative independence, while Article (18) defines the Council's objective as monitoring the operational activities of service providers and ensuring the quality and efficiency of services, thereby confirming its regulatory and oversight role. Article (20) requires the Council to submit semi-annual reports to the Council of Ministers, illustrating the reporting and institutional relationship between the Council and the executive authority, while Article (21) grants the Council of Ministers the authority to appoint and dismiss members of the Board of Directors.

The relationship with the Palestinian Water Authority is regulatory and supervisory in nature. Article (8) defines the Authority's functions in managing water resources and facilities, while the Council's role is limited to licensing, setting standards, and monitoring compliance with applicable laws and regulations, without interfering in operational management. As for regional water utilities and water user associations, the Council is responsible for regulating their operations, monitoring their compliance with legal and technical standards, and ensuring service quality, based on Article (1) - Definitions, which determines the status of each party and its relationship with the Council.

7 Decree-Law No. (18) of 2019 Amending Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water. Ramallah: Palestinian Official Gazette.

8 Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water and its Amendments.

Analysis of the Legislative Framework of the Water Sector in Palestine and the Overlap of Institutional Mandates

The regulation of the water sector in Palestine is based on a multi-level legislative framework that, in its theoretical structure, aims to establish an institutional model grounded in functional separation between the levels of public policymaking, regulation and oversight, and service provision and operations. Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water constitutes the primary legislative framework that restructured the sector by defining the institutional roles of key actors, most notably the Palestinian Water Authority, the Water Sector Regulatory Council, and regional water utilities, while maintaining the role of local authorities within a transitional framework regulated by the same law.

At the policy level, Articles (7) and (8) of the Water Law stipulate that the Palestinian Water Authority is the entity responsible for managing water resources in Palestine, including the development of public water policies, strategies, and plans, the regulation of the exploitation of water resources, and the establishment of technical and planning standards for water and wastewater projects. This framework confirms that the Authority plays a leading role in water resource management and strategic planning for the sector, in line with the principles of integrated and sustainable water management, while the Council of Ministers is responsible for approving these policies.

At the regulatory level, the Water Sector Regulatory Council was established as an independent regulatory authority responsible for oversight and regulation of water and wastewater service providers. Under Article (24) of Decree-Law No. (18) of 2019 amending Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water, the Council is entrusted with a range of regulatory powers, most notably recommending to the Council of Ministers the approval of water tariffs, connection fees, and service charges; recommending the issuance of licenses for regional water utilities and service operators; monitoring compliance with licensing conditions; setting service quality standards; following up on the operational performance of service providers; and establishing technical and financial databases and publishing them periodically. This role reflects the regulatory nature of the Council as the competent authority responsible for overseeing service delivery efficiency and ensuring a balance between the interests of consumers and service providers.

At the operational level, the Regulation on the Establishment and Licensing of Regional Water Utilities No. (17) of 2021 defines the institutional framework for regional water utilities as the entities responsible for providing water and wastewater services to subscribers and for managing and operating water networks. Article (6) of the Regulation specifies the functions of these utilities, which include managing and developing water and wastewater services, implementing projects, improving operational efficiency, and complying with quality standards and performance indicators issued by the regulatory council.

However, a comprehensive reading of these legislative provisions reveals the continued existence of certain areas of institutional overlap, particularly in relation to local authorities. The Palestinian Local Authorities Law No. (1) of 1997 grants local authorities powers related to supplying water to residents, regulating its distribution, and determining tariffs and subscription fees, which may appear to intersect with the regulatory competencies stipulated in Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014.

Nevertheless, the legislator has addressed this potential conflict through two key legal mechanisms. The first is set out in Article (66) of the Water Law, which provides for the repeal of any prior legislation inconsistent with its provisions, thereby establishing the Water Law as the prevailing legal reference for regulating the sector. The second mechanism is found in Article (64), which introduces a transitional provision allowing local authorities to continue providing water services until regional water utilities or the National Water Company are established. This indicates that the continued role of local authorities in service provision represents a transitional arrangement within the broader process of sector restructuring, rather than a permanent model for service delivery.

Despite this legislative framework, practical implementation reveals the persistence of a degree of partial institutional duplication due to the slow pace of completing the institutional transition toward the regional utilities model. This results in actual overlap in certain functions among sector actors, particularly in areas such as tariff-setting, service regulation, and data exchange. This suggests that the primary challenge in water sector governance is not the absence of a legal framework, but rather the pace of implementation of the institutional reforms stipulated in the legislation.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that the legislative framework of the water sector in Palestine is, in principle, oriented toward establishing a modern model for regulating public utilities based on the separation of policymaking, regulation, and operation. However, the full realization of this objective remains contingent

upon completing the institutional transformation process and strengthening coordination among sector stakeholders, in a manner that ensures clarity of regulatory mandates and improves governance efficiency in the management of water services.

In practice, a level of institutional coordination and integration exists between the Water Sector Regulatory Council and the Palestinian Water Authority, which has been structured through written understandings aimed at regulating the relationship between the two entities and defining their respective areas of competence, in line with the functional separation approach adopted by the legislator between policymaking, regulatory, and executive roles.

Although a degree of overlap has been observed in certain technical and regulatory aspects, this overlap essentially falls within the framework of necessary institutional coordination required to manage a vital and complex sector such as water. It does not necessarily constitute a conflict of mandates, provided that it is governed by clear understandings that contribute to enhancing complementarity of roles and avoiding duplication of efforts. This pattern of relationship contributes to improving data and information exchange, supporting regulatory decision-making, and strengthening oversight over regional water utilities within a unified institutional framework.

As for the relationship with the Council of Ministers, it is defined within a clear legal framework and is limited to sovereign powers explicitly stipulated in Decree-Law No. (18) of 2019 on Water⁹, particularly Article (24) as amended. Under these provisions, the role of the Council of Ministers is confined to the final approval of water tariffs, connection fees, and other service charges, as well as the issuance of licenses for regional water utilities, based on reasoned technical and regulatory recommendations issued by the Water Sector Regulatory Council. This framework confirms that the involvement of the Council of Ministers in these areas is of an endorsing nature, based on the Council's recommendations, and does not extend to the preparation of tariffs, the evaluation of licensing applications, or the follow-up of technical and regulatory aspects related thereto.

In response, the Council is entrusted, under the same article, with a broad range of inherent regulatory and oversight powers. These include reviewing and monitoring tariffs to ensure their consistency with approved policies; examining compliance with licensing conditions and requirements; following up on the operational activities of water and wastewater utilities; handling complaints between service providers and consumers; establishing and publishing service quality standards; and developing and periodically publishing a technical, financial, and statistical database. This precise distribution of powers highlights that the Council is the competent authority for technical and administrative regulation and oversight, while the Council of Ministers retains final sovereign powers with broad public impact.

Limiting the intervention of the Council of Ministers within this defined framework contributes to preserving the regulatory independence of the Council, while ensuring that decisions with economic and social implications, particularly those related to tariffs and licensing, remain aligned with government directions and public policies for the water sector. This model reflects an intentional institutional balance between the requirements of regulatory independence and sovereign oversight, consistent with the principles of good governance and the functional separation between regulation and public policymaking. It also enhances the effectiveness of water sector management and the protection of the public interest.

In this context, the Palestinian Water Authority¹⁰ points to a set of structural challenges affecting the regularity of institutional governance in the water sector, foremost among them the multiplicity of reference authorities and the overlap of roles among the Ministry of Local Government, the Palestinian Water Authority, and the Water Sector Regulatory Council. This overlap is particularly evident across three dimensions: regulatory, executive, and oversight functions. While the Council establishes regulatory frameworks and technical and legal standards for service providers and utilities, the Authority issues licenses and monitors compliance with technical and legal requirements, and the Ministry of Local Government participates in managing certain local projects and facilities, which may at times lead to overlapping mandates.

This overlap contributes to increased complexity in decision-making processes and limits the clarity of accountability lines, negatively affecting the effectiveness of institutional coordination and the achievement of the required level of integration among sector actors. In this regard, the central water sector database plays a vital role in unifying information and improving oversight and decision-making processes. However, the multiplicity of entities overseeing data may lead to duplication of information and difficulties in coordination. Moreover, the clarity of institutional structures, including the Council, the Authority, regional utilities, and

⁹ Decree-Law No. (18) of 2019 Amending Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water.

¹⁰ Interview with Mr. Imad Abdeh, Palestinian Water Authority, conducted on 28/01/2026.

water user associations, constitutes a key factor in ensuring institutional integration and effective oversight of operational, financial, and regulatory performance in the sector.

The Palestinian Water Authority also indicates the existence of discrepancies in data between the Council and the Authority, reflecting weaknesses in information-sharing systems and joint databases. This shortcoming represents a fundamental challenge, as it affects the accuracy of planning, the soundness of technical and financial analysis, and undermines the reliability of regulatory and oversight outputs, particularly in a sector that relies heavily on data for resource management and performance evaluation.

In the same context, the Palestinian Water Authority notes a lack of clarity regarding the nature of the oversight exercised by the Water Sector Regulatory Council, whether in terms of its scope, tools, or outputs. This ambiguity leads to overlaps in oversight roles, weakens the ability to assess the Council's effectiveness in performing its regulatory function, and limits the possibility of holding it accountable based on clear and publicly defined standards.

In addition, the Palestinian Water Authority points to shortcomings in disclosure by the Water Sector Regulatory Council with respect to data and information, despite the Council's possession of a broad and significant information base on the water sector. This deficiency in disclosure constrains transparency and limits the ability of institutional partners and stakeholders to utilize this data to improve planning, strengthen oversight, and support evidence-based decision-making.

The perspective of the Ministry of Local Government¹¹ contributes to completing the analytical picture of the institutional relationships governing the water sector by highlighting structural gaps that limit the effectiveness of the existing regulatory framework. The Ministry confirms that the Water Sector Regulatory Council lacks practical enforcement tools that would enable it to translate its recommendations and oversight reports into binding obligations for service providers. This is evident in the persistence of several structural imbalances, most notably the escalating sectoral debt without decisive regulatory interventions, which weakens the practical impact of the Council's oversight role.

In this context, the Ministry indicates that the legislative framework governing the water sector, particularly the Water Law, has not achieved sufficient harmonization with other applicable related laws, resulting in overlaps in roles and mandates among key actors. This is particularly evident in the dual role of the Palestinian Water Authority, which combines responsibilities for policymaking and strategic planning on the one hand, with engagement in water sales on the other. This raises governance concerns related to conflicts of interest and weak functional separation between policymaking and implementation, thereby limiting the effectiveness of neutral regulation in the sector¹².

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Local Government clarifies that the scope of its intervention remains governed by the provisions of the Local Authorities Law No. (1) of 1997 and its amendments. Its role is limited to exercising technical, financial, and administrative oversight over local authorities that provide water services, without extending to broader regulatory or tariff-setting functions within the sector. This legal delineation reflects the continued state of institutional fragmentation in the management of the water sector and the absence of a fully empowered regulatory reference authority. This calls for a reconsideration of the legislative and institutional framework in a manner that enhances clarity of roles, reinforces functional separation, and equips the Water Sector Regulatory Council with effective enforcement tools, thereby supporting sector governance and strengthening its financial and service sustainability¹³.

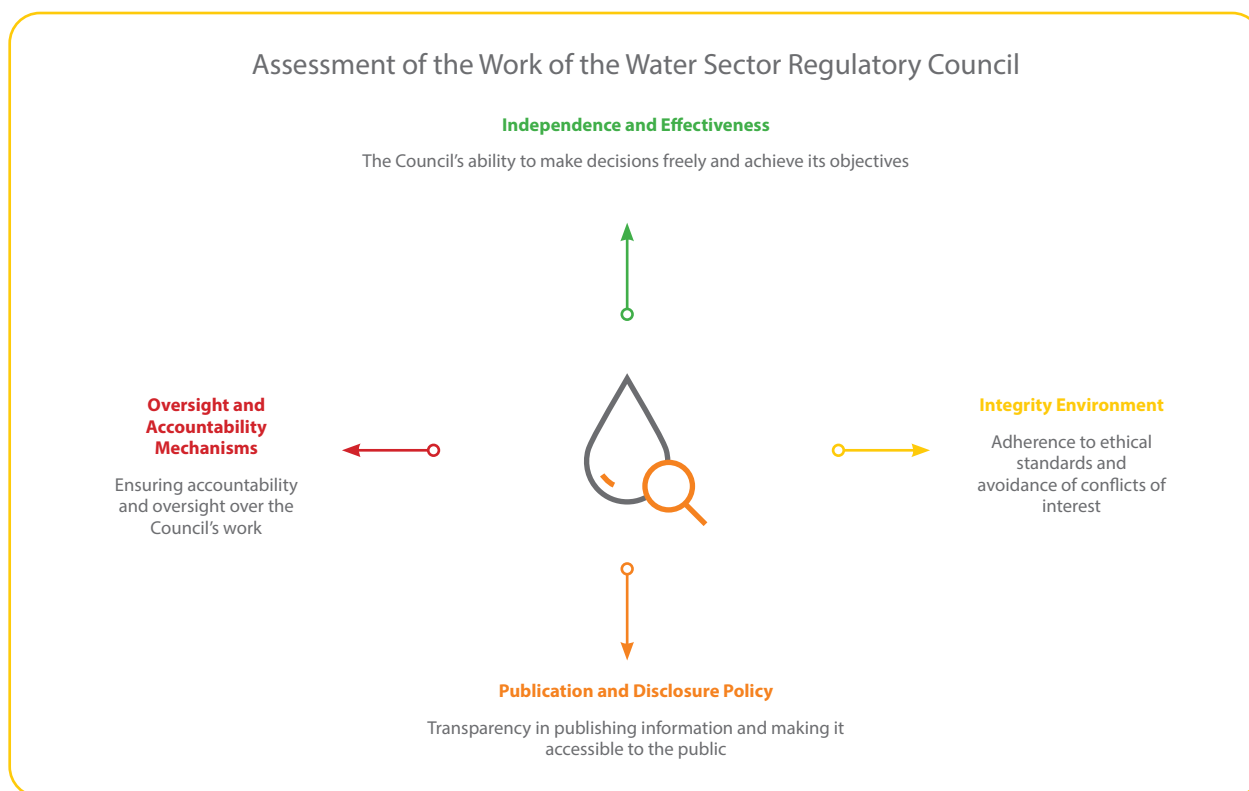
Accordingly, a combined reading of the perspectives of the Palestinian Water Authority and the Ministry of Local Government indicates that strengthening water sector governance requires a fundamental reform of the legislative and institutional framework. This should be based on unifying regulatory references, enhancing data sharing and disclosure, and empowering the Water Sector Regulatory Council with effective oversight enforcement tools. Such measures would ensure the independence of regulatory decision-making, strengthen accountability, and reduce structural risks affecting the sustainability of the sector and the quality of its services.

11 Interview with Mr. Khaled Shtayyeh, Assistant Undersecretary for Local Authorities Affairs, Ministry of Local Government, conducted on 33/02/2026.

12 Interview with Mr. Khaled Shtayyeh, Assistant Undersecretary for Local Authorities Affairs, Ministry of Local Government, conducted on 33/02/2026.

13 Interview with Mr. Khaled Shtayyeh, Assistant Undersecretary for Local Authorities Affairs, Ministry of Local Government, conducted on 33/02/2026.

Third: The State of Independence Governance in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council



A. The State of Independence in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council

This section examines the state of independence and effectiveness in the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, based on a set of analytical questions detailed in Annex (1) of the report, which constitute the reference framework for this assessment. These questions focus on the extent to which the Council enjoys legal, financial, and administrative independence; the mechanisms for appointing and terminating its leadership and staff; the existence of dedicated and duly adopted administrative and financial systems and an independent budget; as well as the evaluation of its regulatory and oversight roles, particularly in the areas of licensing, tariff regulation, issuance of instructions, and dispute resolution.

This analysis aims to review the legal provisions and actual practices and to link them, in order to provide an objective assessment of the Council's effectiveness in performing its regulatory functions within the governance framework adopted in the water sector.

The operational reality of the Water Sector Regulatory Council indicates that it enjoys a relatively adequate degree of independence in legal, financial, and administrative aspects, based on the provisions contained in Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water and its amendments. The Council possesses legal personality and financial and administrative independence and exercises its regulatory and oversight powers directly without interference in its day-to-day operations. This independence is reflected in the Council's ability to carry out its regulatory and technical responsibilities in accordance with the applicable legal frameworks, including regulating the water sector, monitoring the performance of regional water utilities, and ensuring their compliance with technical, financial, and regulatory standards.

With regard to licensing, the legal framework assigns the Council the responsibility of recommending to the Council of Ministers the issuance of licenses for regional water utilities, following the review of submitted applications and verification of their compliance with the established conditions and standards¹⁴. This role reflects the Council's regulatory and technical function, whereby it prepares the necessary technical and regulatory assessments, while the Council of Ministers retains the final authority to issue licenses, as a sovereign decision with national and institutional dimensions.

¹⁴ Article (2) of Decree-Law No. (18) of 2019 Amending Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water.

Similarly, the role of the Council of Ministers in the area of tariffs and water pricing is limited to final approval, based on a reasoned technical and regulatory recommendation issued by the Water Sector Regulatory Council¹⁵. This intervention is clearly defined and restricted by legal provisions and does not extend to the preparation of tariffs or to the day-to-day regulatory and oversight aspects undertaken by the Council.

This distribution of powers highlights a model based on functional separation between the Council's technical regulatory role and the Council of Ministers' sovereign endorsing role, thereby achieving an institutional balance that accommodates the requirements of regulatory independence on the one hand, and government oversight over decisions of broad public impact on the other. This approach is consistent with the principles of good governance and enhances the effectiveness of water sector management.

With regard to the mechanisms for appointing the Chairperson and members of the Board of Directors, as well as Council staff, and terminating their mandates, these processes are governed by clear and specific legal provisions¹⁶. The Chairperson and Board members are appointed by a decision of the Head of State based on a nomination by the Council of Ministers, in accordance with criteria emphasizing integrity, competence, and expertise, alongside defined terms of office and conditions for termination. The Executive Director is appointed by the Board of Directors and is responsible for managing the Council's executive apparatus, while staff are subject to a dedicated administrative system. This structure reflects a stable and clearly defined institutional framework for human resource management, balancing institutional independence with the legal regulations governing public service.

At the level of organizational structure, the Council has a dedicated administrative and financial system¹⁷, issued in accordance with the applicable legal procedures, which regulates staff affairs, financial rights, organizational structures, and administrative and financial procedures.

This system contributes to strengthening institutional order, clarifying powers and responsibilities, and providing a supportive regulatory environment for the Council to perform its functions efficiently and professionally, in line with its role as an independent regulatory authority.

With respect to financial independence, the Council currently has an approved and dedicated financial system and an independent budget managed separately from the public budget. At present, it relies entirely on donor funding. This situation represents a transitional phase, as preparations are underway for a gradual shift toward a more sustainable financial model through the integration of revenues from licensing fees and service charges into its budget starting in 2026, in accordance with the provisions of the Decree-Law, and in parallel with the phasing out of grant funding. This transition is expected to strengthen the Council's actual financial independence and reduce its reliance on external funding.

At the functional level, the Water Sector Regulatory Council plays a central role in licensing water and wastewater service providers, regulating tariffs, and monitoring the performance of regional water utilities in terms of compliance with approved technical, financial, and regulatory standards¹⁸. The Council exercises these powers regularly and effectively, noting that the role of the Council of Ministers is limited to final approval of tariffs and water prices, without extending to other executive or oversight aspects, thereby preserving the core of the Council's regulatory role.

The Council also issues the regulatory instructions necessary for the operation of regional water utilities and plays a role in resolving disputes that may arise between these utilities and consumers, within the scope of its assigned powers¹⁹.

This role contributes to enhancing regulatory discipline, protecting consumer rights, and improving the quality of services provided, reflecting an acceptable level of effectiveness in the performance of its regulatory and oversight functions.

Overall, this assessment indicates that the Water Sector Regulatory Council enjoys a good degree of independence and effectiveness in carrying out its functions within a clear legal and institutional framework, with limited government intervention confined by legal provisions to the area of tariffs. Furthermore, the shift toward strengthening financial independence through diversification of revenue sources starting in 2026 represents a fundamental step toward enhancing the sustainability of the Council's work and improving governance in the water sector, in line with the principles of integrity, transparency, and accountability underpinning this report.

15 Article (2) of Decree-Law No. (18) of 2019 Amending Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water.

16 Article (21) of Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water.

17 Council of Ministers Decisions No. (11) and No. (12) of 2016 on the Administrative and Financial Regulations of the Water Sector Regulatory Council.

18 Article (2) of Decree-Law No. (18) of 2019 Amending Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water.

19 Article (2) of Decree-Law No. (18) of 2019 Amending Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water.

B. Integrity Environment in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council

This section of the report analyzes the integrity environment in the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, based on a set of analytical questions (indicators) detailed in Annex (1) for this purpose, which constitute the methodological framework for assessing the extent to which integrity values are embedded in the Council's institutional structure and operational practices. These questions focus on the mechanisms for appointing the Chairperson, Board members, and staff; the availability of policies and regulations governing the prevention of conflicts of interest; codes of conduct; financial disclosure statements; rules governing the acceptance of gifts; as well as mechanisms for reporting corruption and protecting whistleblowers, and programs aimed at raising awareness of the causes, forms, prevention, and risk management of corruption. This analysis aims to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of the existing regulatory framework in mitigating corruption risks and enhancing trust and neutrality in regulatory performance, in line with the integrity and governance standards adopted in the reports of the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN).

The framework governing the establishment and composition of the Water Sector Regulatory Council reflects the existence of a defined and transparent legal and regulatory structure, with mechanisms for appointing the Chairperson, Board members, and staff that limit personal interference. These appointments are carried out in accordance with the provisions of the Decree-Law on Water and relevant regulations, based on specific criteria relating to competence, integrity, and legal eligibility. According to Articles (3, 4, and 5) of the Administrative Regulation of the Water Sector Regulatory Council issued by Council of Ministers Decision No. (11) of 2016²⁰, staff are appointed based on the Council's actual needs, staffing structures, and budget allocations (Article 3), while adhering to defined procedures that promote integrity and transparency. Article (4) stipulates that the Executive Director is appointed by a decision of the Board of Directors, department directors are appointed based on the recommendation of an interview and appointment committee, and other staff are appointed by the Executive Director based on the same committee's recommendation, ensuring an objective evaluation mechanism for applicants. Article (5) requires appropriate qualifications and experience, Palestinian nationality, good conduct, no conviction for crimes involving dishonor, and a minimum age of 18 years. The provisions also include interviews and assessment tests for candidates, official job announcements, safeguards against the recruitment of relatives, and a probationary period to assess competence prior to confirmation. This reflects the Council's commitment to the principles of integrity and transparency in recruitment and promotion. This framework contributes to establishing a legal foundation that enhances institutional integrity in filling leadership and executive positions, although it remains associated with a degree of executive centralization in appointment decisions.

With regard to the prevention of conflicts of interest, the legal framework addresses this issue directly by explicitly prohibiting conflicts of interest for the Chairperson and members of the Board of Directors, as well as for the Executive Director and Council staff, in line with the requirements of integrity and neutrality in regulatory decision-making. This provision constitutes an important legal basis for regulating this aspect and represents a key legislative strength within the integrity environment, particularly given the sensitivity of the regulatory decisions taken by the Council and their direct impact on service providers and consumers.

However, this legal prohibition has not been translated into a dedicated and detailed institutional policy for managing conflicts of interest specific to Board members and staff. In practice, this issue is addressed through the Code of Conduct applicable to Board members and staff, adopted in 2018. While the Code is important in defining general values and behavioral standards, reliance on it alone, without a separate and clearly defined conflict of interest policy that includes disclosure mechanisms, procedures for handling conflict situations, follow-up measures, and sanctions, may limit the effectiveness of the practical application of the legal provision and keep conflict of interest management within a general normative framework rather than a detailed procedural one.

Accordingly, it can be stated that the integrity environment in this regard is based on a clear legal foundation; however, enhancing its effectiveness requires the development of more specialized regulatory tools that would transform the legal prohibition from a theoretical obligation into an institutional practice that is measurable and enforceable. This would strengthen confidence in the neutrality of the Council's regulatory decisions and reduce the risks of undue influence on its work.

The Water Sector Regulatory Council also has a comprehensive Code of Conduct applicable to its Board members and staff²¹, which defines the values and behavioral standards to be adhered to in the performance of official duties. These include core values such as integrity, transparency, professional responsibility, compliance with laws and regulations, and respect for public interest. The Code constitutes an important regulatory tool

20 Council of Ministers Decision No. (11) of 2016 on the Administrative Regulation of the Water Sector Regulatory Council.

21 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Hmeid, Executive Director of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

for promoting a culture of integrity and good governance, as a single code is applied to all Board members and staff to ensure uniform behavioral standards and accountability.

The Code is disseminated to all staff and Board members, supported by periodic training programs to introduce the expected principles and practices, and compliance is monitored through periodic evaluations and internal oversight mechanisms. The existence of such a Code is considered a positive indicator of the Council's adoption of a preventive approach to managing ethical risks associated with its work, and to strengthening accountability and adherence to institutional values.

With regard to financial disclosure statements, Board members and staff are required to submit such declarations in accordance with the forms approved by the Anti-Corruption Commission²² and in line with relevant national legislation. This requirement contributes to enhancing financial transparency and limiting opportunities for illicit enrichment, while also providing a supporting oversight tool for the integrity and accountability system.

Regarding the acceptance of gifts, the Council does not have a dedicated internal system or independent instructions regulating this aspect and instead adheres to the general government framework in force. No specific committee has been established to address the issue of gifts, as provided for in the relevant regulations²³. While this adherence provides a basic regulatory framework, the absence of detailed internal instructions specific to the Council may limit the clarity of applicable standards, particularly given the nature of its regulatory role and its direct interaction with entities subject to its oversight.

As for reporting corruption cases, the Council has a clear policy for reporting corruption and fraud, approved by the Board of Directors and circulated among staff, serving as an official reporting channel and promoting a culture of internal accountability²⁴. However, the effectiveness of this policy remains dependent on the level of trust in it and the clarity of procedures for protecting whistleblowers and witnesses in practice.

At the level of raising staff awareness of the causes, forms, and methods of combating corruption, there are no dedicated and regular internal training programs for this purpose within the Council. Instead, staff participate in general workshops organized by external entities²⁵. This approach is relatively limited in impact compared to the existence of internal awareness programs specifically designed to address the Council's operational context and regulatory risks.

Finally, the Council does not have systematic mechanisms or tools for assessing corruption risks that may affect its work and regulatory decisions²⁶. The absence of this element constitutes one of the most significant weaknesses in the integrity environment, as it prevents the transition from reactive handling of corruption cases to proactive risk management, which is inconsistent with best practices in governance and preventive oversight.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that the integrity environment within the Water Sector Regulatory Council is grounded in a legal and regulatory framework that provides the essential requirements for integrity. However, strengthening this environment requires the development of more specialized internal tools, particularly in the areas of corruption risk management, systematic awareness-raising, and the regulation of certain detailed behavioral aspects, in a manner consistent with the Council's regulatory role and conducive to enhancing public trust in its work.

C. Publication, Disclosure, and Transparency Policy in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council

This section is devoted to analyzing the level of transparency, publication, and disclosure in the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, based on a set of analytical questions outlined in Annex (1) (Transparency Indicators), which constitute the reference framework for assessing the Council's adherence to the principles of openness and access to information. These questions focus on the extent to which decisions issued by the Council and its executive management are published; the nature of the reports issued by the Council and the mechanisms for their submission, follow-up, and auditing; the availability of an independent budget and its publication to the public; the existence of an institutional policy for openness and public communication and its implementation mechanisms; the effectiveness of the Council's website in promoting the right of access to information; and the transparency of procedures related to recruitment and procurement. This analysis

22 Interview with Mr. Mohammad Khalifa, Anti-Corruption Commission, conducted on 02/03/2026.

23 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Hmeid, Executive Director of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

24 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Hmeid, Executive Director of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

25 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Hmeid, Executive Director of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

26 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Hmeid, Executive Director of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

aims to assess the adequacy of existing disclosure policies and their capacity to enhance participation, social accountability, and trust in the Council, its staff, and the level of services provided.

The current state of publication and disclosure in the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council reveals a clear limitation in the level of institutional transparency, as decisions issued by the Board of Directors or the executive management are not made public, whether through the Council's website²⁷ or other official channels. The absence of publication of these decisions weakens the principle of transparency and limits the ability of stakeholders, particularly water service providers and consumers, to access the regulatory bases governing the Council's work and directly affecting their rights and obligations.

With respect to publication and disclosure practices, it is noted that administrative and annual reports are published on the Council's website, allowing the public and stakeholders to review the Council's activities and overall performance, thereby contributing to enhancing institutional transparency. As for financial reports, their publication was limited in earlier periods; however, the Council has responded to relevant recommendations and proceeded to publish them promptly on its website, reflecting a positive orientation toward strengthening financial disclosure and responsiveness to evaluation and oversight observations.

Nevertheless, these practices continue to rely largely on administrative initiatives rather than on an organized institutional framework. This underscores the need for the adoption of a written and publicly available publication and disclosure policy by the Water Sector Regulatory Council, clearly defining the scope of information to be disclosed, the frequency of publication, and the responsibilities of relevant internal entities, in a manner that ensures consistency and sustainability of disclosure and strengthens compliance with the principles of transparency and good governance in the management of the water sector.

With regard to the publication of the budget, it was noted that it had not been publicly disclosed, and no publicly available information existed regarding its items or expenditure allocations. This weakens the level of financial transparency and limits opportunities for public participation and oversight in the management of public resources related to a vital sector such as water, as well as in contributing to the determination of sector priorities. The budget was subsequently published following a public discussion session, based on a recommendation of this report.

At the level of openness and communication with the public, the Council does not have a written or formally adopted policy in this regard. Its engagement with the public is limited to participation in meetings or sessions convened by the Palestinian Water Authority or municipalities, or upon request by local entities²⁸. This form of engagement remains non-systematic and is not grounded in a clear institutional policy, which limits its effectiveness in enhancing public trust or involving stakeholders in the regulatory process.

On the other hand, the Council maintains an active website that provides access to an open and publicly available database containing technical, financial, and statistical information related to the water sector. This represents one of the key strengths of the Council's disclosure policy, as it reflects a positive orientation toward access to information and aligns with the principles of the right to information, although it does not sufficiently cover regulatory decisions or other key documents related to the Council's work.

With respect to transparency in recruitment and procurement procedures, the mechanisms for appointing Council staff are governed by its administrative regulation, while procurement procedures are conducted in accordance with the approved financial regulation. This regulatory framework provides a structured procedural basis for managing human and financial resources and contributes to clarifying powers and responsibilities within the Council.

In this context, it is observed that job announcements are indeed published in accordance with established procedures²⁹, providing opportunities for applicants and reinforcing the principle of equal opportunity in employment. However, the level of transparency remains limited with regard to procurement procedures and their outcomes, as details of procurement processes and contract award decisions are not disclosed to the public. This limits transparency and social accountability in this area and confines transparency to internal procedural levels without extending it to the public domain.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that while transparency in recruitment demonstrates an acceptable level of disclosure, transparency in procurement still requires further development through the adoption of clearer and more systematic publication policies, in line with the requirements of good governance and in a manner that enhances public trust in the management of public resources.

27 Water Sector Regulatory Council Website. Available at: <https://www.wsrc.ps/>

28 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Hmeid, Executive Director of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

29 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Hmeid, Executive Director of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

Based on the above, it can be stated that the publication and disclosure policy in the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council is characterized by a partial and selective approach. Transparency is largely concentrated in the exchange of information with official entities and in the provision of certain technical data through the website, while there remains a clear deficiency in the publication of decisions, budgets, and reports to the public, as well as the absence of an institutional policy for openness and communication. This reality constitutes one of the key challenges to strengthening good governance and limits the role of transparency as a tool for promoting integrity and social accountability in the water sector.

D. Oversight, Accountability, and Audit Mechanisms in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council

This section focuses on assessing the oversight, auditing, and accountability mechanisms applied to the work of the Council, and their effectiveness in detecting corruption cases. The questions included in Annex (1) are designed to cover various aspects of internal and external oversight, social accountability mechanisms, complaint-handling processes, as well as the extent to which the Council complies with judicial decisions.

Accountability and oversight over the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council are exercised through the Board of Directors, the Executive Director, and the newly established internal audit function³⁰, within a control framework aimed at monitoring performance and ensuring compliance with applicable laws and regulations. Available data indicate that these mechanisms have not resulted in the detection of corruption cases within the Council³¹. While this may reflect a level of administrative discipline and procedural compliance, it does not negate the need to assess the adequacy and effectiveness of these oversight mechanisms from a preventive and proactive perspective, rather than merely in terms of identifying violations after they occur, particularly given the sensitivity of the Council's regulatory decisions.

At the level of external oversight and auditing, the Council is subject to supervision by multiple entities, including the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau, the Ministry of Finance, the Council of Ministers, as well as an independent external auditor and donor entities³². According to available information, these bodies have not identified cases of corruption or financial or administrative misconduct in the Council's work. While the multiplicity of oversight bodies is a positive factor in strengthening formal accountability, the effectiveness of this oversight remains dependent on the level of coordination among these entities and their ability to move from formal compliance-based oversight to analytical oversight focused on risk assessment and institutional weaknesses.

In this context, the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau conducted an audit of the Council's work for the year 2023 (the most recent report prepared³³), which identified key observations related to institutional and regulatory shortcomings affecting the Council's performance. The audit confirmed findings related to weak coordination and overlapping mandates among relevant entities (the Ministry of Local Government, the Palestinian Water Authority, and the Water Sector Regulatory Council), negatively impacting the efficiency of regulatory decision-making and the Council's independence.

The Bureau also identified discrepancies in data between the Council and the Palestinian Water Authority, as well as the absence of a unified national database for the water sector.

At the internal level, the Bureau observed deficiencies in procedural manuals, work procedures, and regulatory systems, particularly within the internal oversight and complaints units, as well as the absence of an effective internal control unit. This weakens the internal control system and preventive oversight mechanisms. It also noted the absence of comprehensive field inspection visits to service providers, especially in marginalized areas, and limited geographical coverage of oversight activities, resulting in regulatory gaps and affecting service quality.

With regard to consumer complaint management, the audit revealed the absence of an approved job description for the complaints unit and the lack of a written and publicly available mechanism for handling and following up on complaints, which limits transparency and affects public trust.

30 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Hmeid, Executive Director of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

31 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Hmeid, Executive Director of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

32 Interview with Mr. Riyadh Al-Deesi, Financial and Administrative Director at the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

33 Interview with Mr. Thalji Shoman, State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau, conducted on 28/01/2026.

From a financial and regulatory perspective, service fees were not collected from water service providers for the years 2022–2024, and a significant number of service providers did not comply with the new tariff structure, thereby undermining the Council’s regulatory role. In addition, it was observed that the Council did not consistently implement periodic water quality testing programs and demonstrated weak follow-up on their results, which affects the protection of public health and consumer rights, and weakens disclosure, transparency, and civil society engagement.

Based on these observations, the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau recommended activating the oversight manual issued by the Water Sector Regulatory Council and ensuring its systematic application to enhance risk-based oversight, improve institutional performance, strengthen integrity, transparency, and accountability in the water sector.

With regard to social accountability, there are no clear indicators of the existence of structured or systematic social accountability mechanisms for the Council’s work³⁴. This absence reflects limited engagement of civil society and water users in assessing the Council’s performance or holding it accountable for its decisions, thereby weakening a fundamental pillar of governance and limiting transparency in a sector that directly affects citizens’ rights and the public interest. According to Principle 10 of the OECD Principles on Water Governance³⁵ (OECD, 2015), the involvement of all stakeholders in decision-making and accountability processes is essential to ensuring efficiency, transparency, and accountability; the absence of such mechanisms leads to weak societal oversight and increased risks of conflicts of interest and mismanagement.

Regarding complaint and grievance handling mechanisms, the Council follows administrative procedures that include registering complaints, referring them to the competent staff member, communicating with the relevant service provider, and working toward resolving or settling the issue. Multiple channels are available for submitting complaints, including electronic means, local radio, and in-person visits to the Council’s offices³⁶. In addition, there is a written complaints system that regulates these procedures and defines the pathways for handling them, constituting an important regulatory framework for enhancing transparency and institutional discipline. This indicates the existence of an organized institutional system for complaint management with an acceptable level of efficiency and openness, serving as a regulatory foundation for strengthening transparency and accountability, with potential for further development toward higher levels of institutional effectiveness.

With regard to reporting, the Water Sector Regulatory Council issues annual financial and administrative reports that are submitted to the Council of Ministers. These reports are subject to multiple layers of review and accountability, including the Board of Directors, the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau, the Ministry of Finance, and the Council of Ministers. This oversight process is a positive indicator of institutional accountability within the governmental framework and reflects that the Council’s work is subject to a multi-level formal oversight system.

Regarding corruption cases, there is no available evidence indicating the existence of such cases within the Council’s operations. Neither the Anti-Corruption Commission nor the Public Prosecution for Corruption Crimes has conducted investigations, and no judicial rulings have been issued by the Corruption Crimes Court against the Council or its staff. While this reflects the absence of detected corruption indicators, it does not eliminate the need to strengthen preventive systems and systematically manage corruption risks.

As for judicial appeals against the Council’s decisions, no such cases have been recorded. This is attributed to the nature of the Council’s role as a regulatory and oversight body rather than an executive entity, with its functions primarily focused on regulation, supervision, and the establishment of frameworks and standards rather than direct implementation³⁷. However, the absence of judicial challenges should not in itself be considered sufficient evidence of the soundness of decisions; rather, it underscores the need to enhance procedural clarity and transparency in regulatory decision-making to ensure legal accountability where necessary.

Based on the foregoing, it can be concluded that the oversight, auditing, and accountability framework governing the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council is characterized by the presence of multiple formal oversight mechanisms that have not revealed corruption cases. However, it is constrained by limited social accountability, insufficient documentation of certain procedures, and the need to strengthen institutional integration and corruption risk management, in line with the requirements of good governance and the objectives of this report.

34 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Hmeid, Executive Director of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

35 OECD. (2015). OECD principles on water governance. OECD Publishing. <https://www.oecd.org/regional/oecd-principles-on-water-governance.htm>

36 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Hmeid, Executive Director of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

37 Interview with Mr. Mohammed Hmeid, Executive Director of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, conducted on 21/01/2026.

Findings and Recommendations

Findings

Assessing the state of independence, integrity, and transparency in the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, as well as the mechanisms for ensuring accountability, constitutes a fundamental entry point for understanding the extent to which the institutional framework governing the sector adheres to the principles of good governance, particularly in light of the Council's sensitive role in regulating a vital resource linked to water security, social equity, and the public interest. This section is based on the results of the institutional, legislative, and practical analysis of the four core dimensions, namely independence, integrity, transparency, and accountability, with the aim of identifying key observations, determining strengths and gaps, and formulating practical, actionable recommendations to enhance integrity and effectiveness in the Council's work.

The findings indicate that the Water Sector Regulatory Council operates within a clear legal framework that affirms its legal, administrative, and financial independence, and grants it direct regulatory and oversight powers enabling it to perform its role as defined by the legislator. This independence is generally reflected in the Council's exercise of its regulatory and technical functions without direct interference in its day-to-day operations, while certain sovereign powers, most notably the approval of tariffs and water prices, remain within the jurisdiction of the Council of Ministers in a manner that does not undermine the core regulatory role of the Council. However, actual financial independence remains in a transitional phase due to near-total reliance on external funding, which poses challenges to the sustainability of the Council's operations, despite the existence of a clear legal and institutional direction toward diversifying revenue sources and strengthening financial independence in the coming years.

At the level of integrity, the Council is found to rely on a legislative and regulatory framework that provides essential requirements for strengthening institutional integrity, particularly in relation to recruitment procedures, conflict of interest prevention, financial disclosure requirements, the existence of a Code of Conduct, and policies for reporting corruption. Collectively, these elements constitute an important preventive foundation, especially given the sensitivity of the regulatory decisions taken by the Council. However, the effectiveness of this framework remains constrained by the absence of systematic tools for corruption risk management, limited specialized internal awareness programs, and the lack of detailed internal instructions governing certain behavioral aspects, such as the acceptance of gifts, thereby limiting the Council's ability to transition from formal compliance to proactive management of ethical risks.

In the area of transparency, publication, and disclosure, the findings reveal a clear gap between the legal framework and the requirements of good governance on the one hand, and actual practice on the other. Despite the availability of an active website that provides access to a technical, financial, and statistical database, the Council does not publish its regulatory decisions, nor does it make its annual financial reports or budget available to the public. Disclosure remains largely confined to internal circulation among official entities. In addition, the absence of a written policy on openness and communication with the public limits proactive transparency and weakens the role of disclosure as a tool for building public trust and enhancing social accountability in a sector that directly affects fundamental rights.

With regard to oversight and accountability, the Council is subject to a multi-level formal oversight system, including both internal and external mechanisms, which has not resulted in the detection of corruption or financial or administrative misconduct to date. While this represents a positive indicator in terms of procedural compliance, it does not necessarily reflect the adequacy of the oversight system in terms of its capacity to proactively identify institutional risks. The absence of structured social accountability mechanisms emerges as one of the most significant weaknesses in the governance framework, alongside limited documentation of complaint-handling procedures and the need to strengthen institutional integration and unify data systems, as also highlighted by the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau.

Accordingly, it can be concluded that the Water Sector Regulatory Council has made notable progress in establishing a legal and institutional framework supportive of independence and integrity. However, translating this framework into advanced governance practices continues to face challenges related to financial sustainability, transparency of regulatory decision-making, corruption risk management, and the expansion of accountability to include civil society and stakeholders. Addressing these challenges in a systematic manner constitutes a key entry point for strengthening good governance in the water sector and enhancing the effectiveness of the Council's regulatory role, in line with the principles of integrity, transparency, and accountability underpinning this report.

Governance Assessment Matrix for the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council

The assessment of governance in the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council is undertaken within the broader effort to enhance the efficiency of managing a vital sector that directly affects the fundamental rights of citizens and the public interest. This assessment serves as an analytical tool aimed at highlighting the extent to which the Council's practices align with the core principles of good governance, including independence, integrity, transparency, accountability, and the effectiveness of its regulatory role. It provides a comprehensive perspective intended to support the improvement of institutional performance and strengthen confidence in the Council's role in regulating the water sector.

Governance Pillar	Indicator	Overall Assessment	Description of Current Situation	Key Governance Observations
Independence	Legal Independence	High	The Council has legal personality and financial and administrative independence as stipulated by law	Independence clearly established in legislation
	Financial Independence	Medium	Independent budget, but fully dependent on external funding until 2025	Financial sustainability risks until own revenues are integrated
	Administrative Independence	High	Dedicated administrative and financial system for the Council	Relative clarity in human resource management
Integrity	Appointment Mechanisms	Medium	Appointments made through sovereign decisions based on competence criteria	Centralization of decision-making limits actual independence
	Conflict of Interest Prevention	Medium	Legal prohibition exists, but no independent policy	Reliance mainly on Code of Conduct (2018)
	Code of Conduct	High	Approved and implemented code	Positive preventive tool
	Financial Disclosure	High	Commitment to submitting declarations	Enhances financial transparency
	Gifts Policy	Low	No specific internal instructions	Dependence on general government framework only
	Corruption Reporting	Medium	Approved reporting policy exists	Need to strengthen whistleblower protection
	Corruption Risk Management	Low	No methodology for risk assessment	Significant preventive gap
Transparency	Publication of Decisions	Low	Regulatory decisions are not published	Limits openness of decision-making
	Administrative Reports	Medium	Published on the website	Positive development
	Financial Reports	Medium	Published following recommendations	Previously inconsistent disclosure
	Budget Disclosure	Medium	Published following recommendations	Previously inconsistent disclosure
	Website	High	Technical and financial database available	Key strength

Accountability	Formal Accountability	High	Subject to oversight by multiple entities	Positive multi-layered oversight
	Social Accountability	Low	No structured mechanisms	Weak civil society engagement
	Complaints System	Medium	Complaints received with a documented system	Acceptable level of documentation and follow-up
Oversight	Internal Oversight	Low	Unit exists formally but lacks reports	Fundamental weakness in internal control
	External Oversight	High	Oversight by audit bureau, external auditor, donors	Multi-level oversight system
	Field Oversight	Low	Limited field visits	Geographic oversight gap
Institutional Relationships	Coordination with Water Authority	Medium	Existing written understandings	Coordination without clear legislative framework
	Clarity of Mandates	Medium	Some overlap among entities	Multiplicity of reference authorities
	Data Sharing	Low	No unified data	Absence of a national database

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on conducted interviews and analysis of relevant laws and regulations.

- This assessment is based on an analysis of the legal framework governing the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, observations of the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau, the views of relevant stakeholders, interviews, and a review of official documents, in accordance with the integrity and governance indicators adopted in the reports of the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN).
- A three-tier descriptive assessment scale was adopted to measure the level of the Council's adherence to governance principles, based on an integrated analysis combining the governing legal framework, institutional arrangements, and the level of actual implementation. A High rating indicates the existence of a clear legal foundation supported by effective institutional policies and procedures, with consistent and verifiable implementation. A Medium rating reflects the presence of legal provisions or organizational arrangements with partial or inconsistent implementation, or lacking complete enforcement tools. A Low rating indicates the absence of a regulatory framework, weak practical implementation, or reliance on undocumented or non-transparent practices. This scale aims to provide an objective and comparative assessment of governance levels and to identify improvement gaps in a manner that supports policy development and strengthens institutional accountability.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the analysis of independence, integrity, transparency, and oversight and accountability in the work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, the report recommends the following:

First: At the Legislative and Institutional Level

The report recommends undertaking a targeted legislative review of the legal framework governing the water sector in Palestine, with the aim of eliminating practical overlaps in the mandates of the Palestinian Water Authority, the Water Sector Regulatory Council, local authorities, and regional water utilities. This review should include clarifying amendments to Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water and the Palestinian Local Authorities Law No. (1) of 1997 to clearly define:

1. The entity exclusively responsible for sector regulation and approval of water service tariffs.
2. The boundaries between the role of the Palestinian Water Authority in policymaking and water resource management, and the role of the Water Sector Regulatory Council in regulation and oversight.
3. The role of local authorities and regional water utilities as operational service providers.

The report also recommends accelerating the completion of institutional transformation toward regional water utilities in accordance with the Regulation on the Establishment and Licensing of Regional Water Utilities No. (17) of 2021, in order to unify service provision, reduce institutional duplication, and enhance governance effectiveness in the sector.

In addition, the report recommends strengthening the legislative and institutional framework governing the Council by granting it judicial enforcement authority to enable the enforcement of its regulatory decisions and enhance its oversight effectiveness over water service providers. It further recommends obligating local authorities and regional utilities to comply with officially approved tariffs, ensuring consistency in pricing policies and preventing parallel practices.

The report also calls for developing institutional coordination mechanisms between the Council, the Palestinian Water Authority, and the Ministry of Local Government through a formal and permanent coordination framework that reduces overlap in mandates and enhances complementarity between policymaking, regulatory, and executive functions. It further recommends enhancing sectoral transparency through the regular publication of water sector data, with a clearly designated reference entity. The Palestinian Council of Ministers should define the entity responsible for managing and publishing such data to ensure unified data governance, improved disclosure quality, and evidence-based decision-making.

Second: At the Level of Integrity and Corruption Prevention

The report recommends adopting a formal institutional methodology for managing corruption risks in the Council's work, based on identifying risk areas related to licensing processes, tariff regulation, and regulatory decision-making, and linking them to clear preventive and oversight measures. This would support a shift from reactive risk handling to proactive prevention. It also recommends completing the regulatory framework for conflict-of-interest prevention by developing detailed internal instructions governing the acceptance of gifts and benefits by Board members and staff, in line with the Council's regulatory role and strengthening institutional neutrality in decision-making.

Furthermore, the report recommends strengthening institutional capacity-building through the implementation of regular, specialized training programs in public sector ethics and corruption risk management, in order to foster a sustainable culture of integrity that goes beyond formal compliance. This should be aligned with the principles set out in the Palestinian Anti-Corruption Law No. (1) of 2005 and international obligations under the United Nations Convention against Corruption.

Third: At the Level of Transparency, Publication, and Disclosure

The report recommends adopting a formal institutional policy on publication and disclosure, obligating the Council to publish key regulatory decisions, annual administrative and financial reports, and the annual budget through its official website. This would strengthen transparency and enable public and stakeholder access to the regulatory framework. It also recommends enhancing the content of the Council's website to include key regulatory documents and essential information related to its work, in line with the principles of the right to access information, thereby facilitating access and strengthening institutional accountability.

Fourth: At the Level of Accountability and Oversight

The report recommends strengthening social accountability by developing regular consultation mechanisms with civil society organizations, water user associations, and beneficiary representatives regarding regulatory policies, tariffs, and service quality, thereby complementing formal accountability mechanisms. It also recommends developing a written and publicly available complaints system that clearly defines submission procedures, processing timelines, follow-up mechanisms, and appeal processes, thereby enhancing transparency and evaluability. In addition, the report recommends strengthening oversight and auditing effectiveness by adopting a risk-based approach, improving coordination among oversight bodies, and accelerating the establishment of a unified national water sector database to address data discrepancies and improve the quality of regulatory decisions.

Fifth: At the Level of Financial Sustainability

The report recommends developing a medium-term financial plan to support the gradual transition from reliance on external funding to a sustainable self-financing model, through integrating revenues from licensing fees and service charges into the Council's budget. This would enhance its actual financial independence and ensure the sustainability of its operations.

Sources and References

First: Laws and Decisions

- Law of the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau No. (15) of 2004, Issue No. 53, Palestinian Official Gazette.
- Law No. (1) of 1997 on Local Authorities, Issue No. 20, Palestinian Official Gazette.
- Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water, Issue No. 108, Ramallah, Palestinian Official Gazette.
- Decree-Law No. (18) of 2019 Amending Decree-Law No. (14) of 2014 on Water, Issue No. 159, Ramallah, Palestinian Official Gazette.
- Council of Ministers Decision No. (11) of 2016 on the Administrative Regulation of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, Ramallah, Palestinian Official Gazette.
- Council of Ministers Decision No. (12) of 2016 on the Financial Regulation of the Water Sector Regulatory Council, Ramallah, Palestinian Official Gazette.
- OECD. (2015). OECD principles on water governance. OECD Publishing. <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/regionaldevelopment/OECD-Principles-on-Water-Governance-en.pdf>

Second: Published Reports

- Annual Reports of the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau (2020-2026).
- Annual Performance Reports of the Water Sector Regulatory Council (2020-2024).
- Annual Performance Monitoring Reports of Water and Wastewater Service Providers in Palestine (2020-2024).
- Annual Financial Report of the Water Sector Regulatory Council for 2024.
- Palestinian Water Authority (2025). National Water Sector Strategy in Palestine 2025-2027.

Third: Websites

- Water Sector Regulatory Council Website: <https://www.wsrc.ps/>
- Palestinian Water Authority Website: <https://www.pwa.ps/ar>
- State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau Website: <https://www.saacb.ps/ar/IndexAr.aspx>
- Palestinian Anti-Corruption Commission Website: <https://www.pacc.ps/>

Fourth: Individual Interviews

No.	Name	Position	Date
1	Mr. Mousa Tanbour	Practicing Lawyer specializing in Local Authorities	11/01/2026
2	Eng. Anas Al-Barq	Director of Water Department, Nablus Municipality	18/01/2026
3	Eng. Areej Kittaneh	Engineer, Water Department, Nablus Municipality	18/01/2026
4	Eng. Mohammad Saeed Al-Hmeidi	Executive Director, Water Sector Regulatory Council	21/01/2026
5	Mr. Riyadh Al-Deesi	Financial and Administrative Director, Water Sector Regulatory Council	21/01/2026
6	Eng. Yousef Al-Baba	Director of Engineering and Construction Department, Al-Bireh Municipality	21/01/2026
7	Eng. Amneh Hamayel	Head of Wastewater Department, Al-Bireh Municipality	21/01/2026
8	Prof. Dr. Abdalnasser Noor	Financial Affairs Specialist	22/01/2026
9	Mr. Mohammad Khalifa	Department Director, Anti-Corruption Commission	26/01/2026
10	Mr. Imad Abdeh	Director of Subscriber Services Department, Palestinian Water Authority	28/01/2026
11	Mr. Majdi Al-Mitani	Acting Director General, General Administration of Infrastructure Sector, State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau	28/01/2026
12	Mr. Thalji Shoman	Head of Financial Audit and Control Section, General Administration of Infrastructure Sector, State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau	03/02/2026
13	Mr. Khaled Shtayyeh	Assistant Undersecretary for Local Authorities Affairs, Ministry of Local Government	

Annex (1): Analysis Indicators

A. State of Independence in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council

1. The extent to which the Council enjoys legal, financial, and administrative independence in performing its functions.
2. Mechanisms for appointing the Chairperson, Board members, and staff, and for terminating their mandates.
3. The existence of an administrative and financial system for the Council.
4. The availability of an independent budget for the Council.
5. The Council's role in licensing, tariff regulation, and oversight of regional water utilities.
6. The Council's role in issuing regulatory instructions and resolving disputes between regional water utilities and consumers.

B. Integrity Environment in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council

1. Mechanisms for appointing the Chairperson, Board members, and staff.
2. The availability of a policy for preventing conflicts of interest for Board members and staff.
3. The existence of a Code of Conduct for Board members and staff.
4. The submission of financial disclosure statements by Board members and staff.
5. The existence of a system or instructions governing the acceptance of gifts, and the extent of compliance by Board members and staff.
6. The availability of mechanisms for reporting corruption and protecting witnesses and whistleblowers within the Council's work.
7. The existence of programs to raise staff awareness of the causes, forms, and methods of combating corruption.
8. The existence of mechanisms to assess corruption risks associated with the Council's work and decisions.

C. Publication, Disclosure, and Transparency Policy in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council

1. Are decisions issued by the Council and its executive management published?
2. Does the Council issue reports on its work and activities (annual, periodic, financial, administrative)? To whom are these reports submitted? To what extent are they followed up, audited, and used for accountability?
3. Does the Council have its own budget? Is it published, and where?
4. Does the Council have a policy for openness and communication with the public? What are the mechanisms for implementing this policy?
5. Does the Council have an effective website? Does it reflect the principle of the right to access information in an accessible and user-friendly manner for beneficiaries?
6. What mechanisms are followed in the recruitment of Council staff and in procurement processes?

D. Oversight, Accountability, and Audit Mechanisms in the Work of the Water Sector Regulatory Council

1. What types of internal oversight and auditing mechanisms exist within the Council? Are they effective? Have they detected any corruption cases? What are the relevant details?
2. What types of external oversight, accountability, and auditing mechanisms apply to the Council? Are they effective? Have they detected any corruption or misconduct?
3. Are there mechanisms for social accountability regarding the Council's work? What are their forms? And how have they been implemented?
4. What mechanisms are in place for handling complaints and grievances submitted to the Council? Is there a complaints box, hotline, or electronic system? How are complaints handled in practice?
5. Has the Council been audited by the State Audit and Administrative Control Bureau? What were the results of such audits?
6. Have any corruption cases occurred within the Council's work? Were they investigated by the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Public Prosecution for Corruption Crimes? Were any judicial rulings issued by the Corruption Crimes Court?
7. Are the Council's decisions subject to judicial appeal? To what extent does the Council comply with judicial rulings?

AMAN
Transparency Palestine



The Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN)

AMAN was established in 2000 as a civil society organization that seeks to combat corruption and promote integrity, transparency and accountability in the Palestinian society. The Coalition was first formed by an initiative from a number of civil society organizations working in the field of democracy, human rights and good governance. In 2006, the Coalition was accredited as a national chapter for Transparency International.

AMAN is a Palestinian think tank and a specialized body providing knowledge on corruption at the local and regional level through producing specialized reports and studies. The periodic publications include: The annual Integrity and Anti-Corruption Report, the annual Palestinian Integrity Index and the National Integrity System studies and reports, in addition to the Coalition's continued contributions to produce reports and studies on the status of corruption in the Arab region.

As part of the global anti-corruption movement - and of international alliances and partnerships with relevant specialized coalitions and organizations - AMAN plays a key role in the transfer and contextualization of necessary international knowledge and tools to combat corruption in all sectors.

Ramallah, Irsal St, Remawi Building, 1st floor

Tel: 2989506 297494 Fax: 2974948

Gaza-Southern Rimal - Habboush St. - Sub of Martyrs St. Dream

Tel: 082884767 Fax: 082884766

Website: www.aman-palestine.org

Email : info@aman-palestine.org

AmanCoalition/    



**Funded by
the European Union**