

## Governance

# Inclusive Digital Governance in Palestine (INDIGO II)

## Better Quality of Life in Palestinian Municipalities through Citizen-Centred Digitalisation

### Why Inclusive Digital Governance Matters

The potential of new digital possibilities in the public sector to bring about social change and improved quality of life can hardly be overstated. Especially in the current fragile context, offering a wide range of digital public services and participation formats can strengthen social cohesion, inclusion, and trust in public administration, as well as reduce disparities.

Digitalisation efforts in Palestine and the MENA region have gathered pace in recent years: some countries have managed to digitalise their public sector to a considerable extent. However, newly created digital service offerings remain underused by citizens and public administrations alike. This can be attributed both to a lack of trust in state institutions, as well as to the fact that in the public sector digital solutions are developed without active involvement of citizens. Therefore, the resulting services and participation formats do not sufficiently take the specific needs of their end users into consideration and are often neither user-friendly nor accessible.

With the current volatile situation in Palestine and considering the large infrastructure damage that the war has left, and the increase in risks of travel due to the security situation, it is now more than ever crucial to enhance inclusive digital governance measures.



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| Project name    | Inclusive Digital Governance in Palestine (INDIGO II)   |
| Commissioned by | Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)   |
| Project region  | Palestine   |
| Partners        | Ministry of Local Governance (political partner), APLA, selected municipalities, MDLF, PICTI and other incubators and accelerators, as well as G3ict, universities and research institutions, possibly also Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology (MTIT), World Bank |
| Duration        | July 2024 – June 2027   |

### How We Approach Digital Governance

INDIGO aims to foster citizens trust in state and administration. Citizens most frequently get in touch with state and administration when needing local services. INDIGO improves **interaction between state and citizens** – in terms of citizen service provision at the local level and possibilities for participation in shaping their immediate environment.

To improve and digitize citizen services, opinions and **needs of citizens** are put at centre stage when designing public services.



Left:  
Participants of a training in human-centred design in Ramallah  
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Right:  
Young people using videogame Minecraft for the design of a public square in Nablus  
© GIZ / Naseer Abu Mariam



Left:  
Human-centred design training session in Gaza  
© GIZ / Nedal Wahidi

Right:  
Final design of a section of Gaza City waterfront co-creatively developed with citizens  
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INDIGO strengthens the capacities of actors from the private sector, academia, civil society and interested citizens to develop citizen-centred **digital services and innovative participation formats**.

To ensure the **accessibility** of developed solutions, the project places a particular focus on the involvement of disadvantaged groups such as women, people with disabilities and young people.

To foster a culture of **learning and transparent exchange and collaboration**, INDIGO implements festivals and innovation labs co-creative collaboration among diverse stakeholders from MENA countries.

### Who Benefits from Inclusive Governance

“When I first came, I wasn’t aware we would actually be part of building a public space that will be reflected in real life.” says Aya, one of 20 youth who were involved in the co-creative design of a Nabuls City Park. The participants aged between 12 and 17 years were introduced to urban design principles while playfully exploring their potential to participate in shaping public spaces utilizing the Video Game Minecraft as visualization and planning tool. The public space was then recreated after their designs, valuing the youth’s efforts: “I am super proud to have participated in this exercise.”

Since INDIGO began in 2020, some 3.452 citizens in 25 Palestinian municipalities have been actively involved in the design of digital services or have contributed to the design of public space by means of innovative formats such as hackathons and gamification. Around 114.500 have been impacted by improved citizen and municipal

services. By the end of the project, 82 proposals for the improvement of municipal quality of life have been developed together with citizens.

In the framework of a hands-on and inclusive certification programme, 55 professionals from civil society, the private sector and municipal government have been trained and certified as human-centred design trainers. This will enable them to guide the design of efficient, user-centred and accessible (digital) services.

Three regional festivals as well as several regional innovation labs offered more than 500 participants from around 40 countries a platform to exchange, share experiences and collaborate on innovative inclusive digital solutions for the region.

### What’s Next in Inclusive Digital Governance

Building on the successes and positive feedback from facilitators, local administration and citizens alike, the project now sets out to create **sustainable structures that sustain the culture of collaboration, sharing and putting citizens needs first**. INDIGO continues to work on making local citizen services more digital while encouraging stakeholders to work together in creating digital prototypes through different inter-Palestinian exchange formats. The goal is to create innovative solutions for municipalities while combining them with opportunities for students and female entrepreneurs, making sure resources across society are put into use for better citizen service provision. Finally, the project supports change-makers from start-ups, communities, representing disadvantaged groups to bring their solutions to the table.

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