



11.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The WBSG infrastructure suffered from decades of neglect during the Israeli occupation and is characterized by an unusually large share of public infrastructure and services provided by UNRWA and NGOs. During 1970-1992, a total of US\$15 per capita was spent on infrastructure in the WBSG, compared with US\$1,500 per capita in Israel and US\$400 in Jordan. Infrastructure has been one of the sector priorities of the PA ever since its inauguration; so far, over US\$216 million have been spent to improve the domestic situation. The violent events in the WBSG (Al-Aqsa Intifada) have already caused devastating effects on the investments and reconstruction efforts of recent years.

11.1

HOUSING & CONSTRUCTION

Construction is still the primary target of private sector investment, but there remains a high demand for housing in the WBSG, mainly due to a lack of government investment, the absence of financing mechanisms, the high birth rate, and a high number of inadequate existing housing units. As a result, Palestinians live in dense conditions with the average number of persons per room being 2.1.

► CONSTRUCTION LICENSES, 1996-1999 (3RD QUARTER)

	1996	1997	1998	1999 (3 rd Q)
No. of Licenses	7,610	8,388	8,956	7,504
- of which for new buildings:	4,540	4,789	5,117	4,469
Total area licensed (1000 m²)	2,592.5	2,891.9	2,974.7	2,588.2
Total licensed dwellings	13,139	13,230	12,826	10,726

(Source: PCBS, 2000.)

11.2

TRANSPORTATION & ROADS

An estimated 40-50% of existing roads in the WBSG - most of which were built before 1967 and during the years of occupation designed to incorporate the West Bank into Israel - require urgent repairs, while the entire road system needs to be reworked in order to facilitate socioeconomic development and expansion in and between Palestinian communities.

The Gaza Airport has meanwhile opened but is still controlled by Israel. Construction of the seaport is underway.

► ROADS (excl. bypass roads)

Total length of road network	2,495 km	(WB: 2,201 km; GS: 294 km)
Main road network	599 km	(WB: 500 km; GS: 99 km)
Sub-road length (regional roads)	704 km	(WB: 639 km; GS: 65 km)
Access roads	1,192 km	(WB: 1,062 km; GS: 130 km)

(Source: PA Ministry of Public Works, 1998.)



► **VEHICLES** (excl. Jerusalem)

	West Bank	Gaza	Total
Private cars	67,838	36,056	103,894
Trucks/commercial cars	17,571	7,728	25,299
Public & private buses	707	146	853
Taxis	3,684	1,173	4,857
Motorcycles/mopeds	109	209	318
Tractors	2,843	1,242	4,085
Trailers/Semi-trailers	388	211	599
Others	174	133	307
TOTAL	93,314	46,898	140,212

(Source: PA Ministry of Transport and Communication, 1999.)

1.3 (TELE)COMMUNICATION

operate separate and independent communications systems and infrastructures including telecommunication/inter-city connection system in the WBSG is almost entirely dependent on Israeli infrastructure.

The responsibility for the provision of lines and services lies with the Palestinian Telecommunications Company (PalTel), in which the PA has a 10% stake. PalTel is in the process of building an independent Palestinian infrastructure to eventually disengage from the Israeli network. Thus far, it has invested over \$200 million in telecommunications infrastructure and increased the number of lines to over 240,000 (as of June 1999). The communication sector is improving although the ratio of telephones to the general population is still rather low. By the end of 1998, 7.7 of all WBSG households had a telephone. On 21 June 1999 Pres. Arafat officially launched the new international dialing code - 970 - for the WBSG and unveiled the first cellular

On 22 March 2000, Palestine became an official territory on the Internet, being designated the top level domain name dot-ps (.ps) by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers -called ISO 3166 list of general codes for countries and territories. By the end of 1998, the number of internet users in Palestine was estimated at 7,500, that of access providers at 12 (PalTel).

In Oct. 2000, the Israeli Communications Min. proposed a plan that would separate the Israeli communications system from that of the PA, making all calls between the two areas international calls. Calls between East Jerusalem and West Jerusalem would also be tolled as international phone connections.



1.4 ELECTRICITY & ENERGY

Most Palestinian households import their electricity from the Israel Electric Co. (IEC), while some Palestinian municipalities, such as Nablus and Jenin, generate their own electricity from small power plants. In addition, the East Jerusalem Electric Co. buys and distributes electricity to Palestinians in East Jerusalem and its concession in the West Bank. Demand for electricity continues to increase as the population grows and industrial use expands.

The PA is currently building a 140-megawatt power station; upon its completion (in 2001), the Gaza Strip is likely to disconnect from the IEC, while with regard to East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the situation is more complicated as these areas are interconnected far more complexly with Israeli ones.

The recent events (Al-Aqsa Intifada) have shown how the Palestinian energy sector still depends on Israel. Since 17 Nov. 2000, and as we go to press, the Israeli govt. has prevented the entrance of fuels to the Gaza Strip as well as stopped two ships (in Ashdod and Ashkelon) from unloading 4,200 tons of gas imported for use in Gaza.

FACTS:

- Some 97-98% of Palestinian households in the WBGS, incl. Jerusalem, have electricity, while the rest has no electricity (4.5% in the GS, 1.1% in the WB).
- Some 96.8% of WBGS households are supplied by public networks, 0.6% rely on private generation.
- The average household electricity consumption is 264.6 kwh (294.3 in urban areas, 217.8 in rural areas, and 223.5 in RCs).
- According to the CEO of the IEC, Avi Razon, the PA accounts for 6% of IEC sales (, 21 Nov. 2000).

(Source - unless otherwise stated: PCBS, January 1999.)