

Strengthening the institutional  
capacity of the State of Palestine  
for sound **waste & chemicals** management

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SYNTHESIS REPORT



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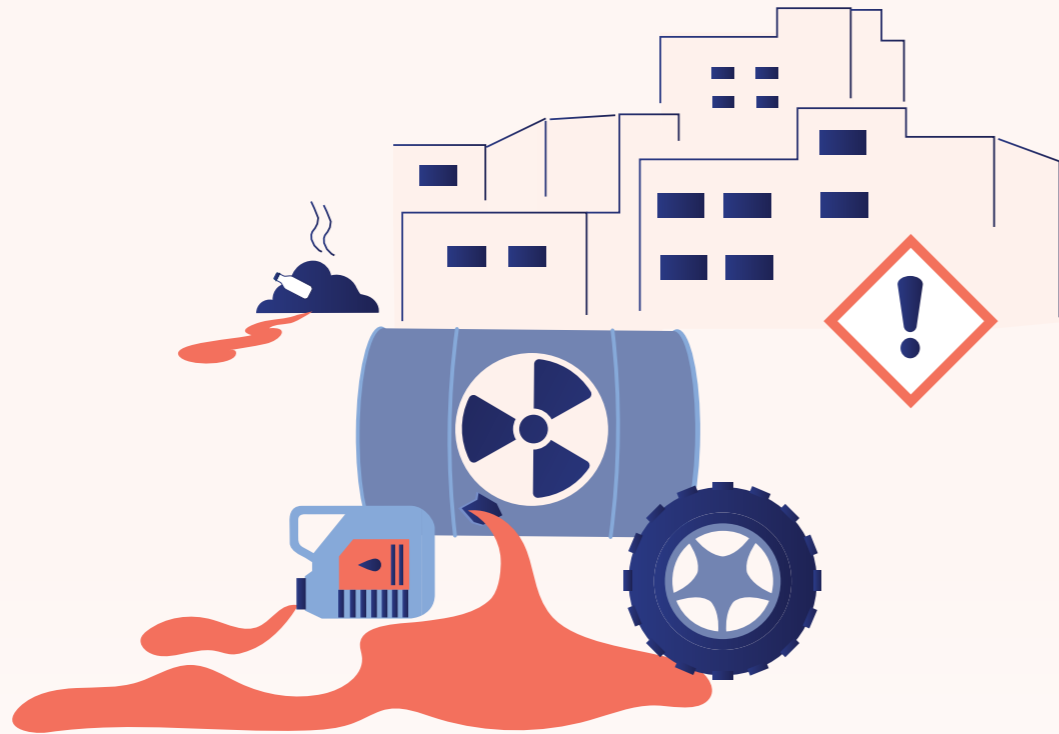
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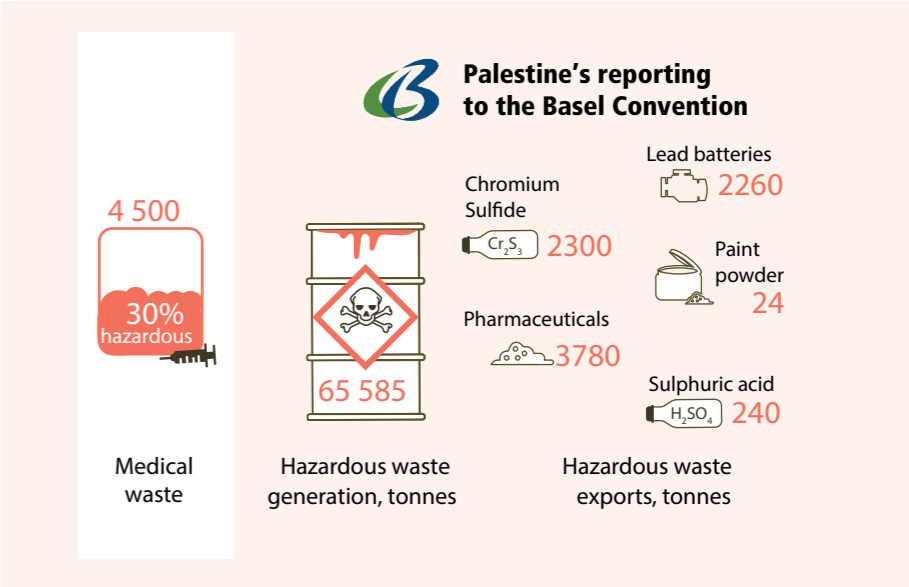


# Introduction

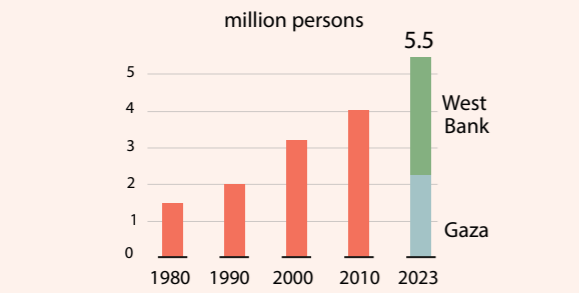
Under the UNEP Special Programme on Institutional Strengthening for the Chemicals Cluster, Palestine has worked to advance its capacity for sound waste and chemicals management. Implemented by the Palestine Environment Quality Authority (EQA) and Zoï Environment Network, the project aimed to identify barriers to chemicals and waste management, conduct trainings to close major gaps, promote overall awareness, and develop roadmaps for next steps. Throughout the project Palestine experienced enhanced stakeholder awareness and improved institutional collaboration on the way forward.

# Situation Analysis

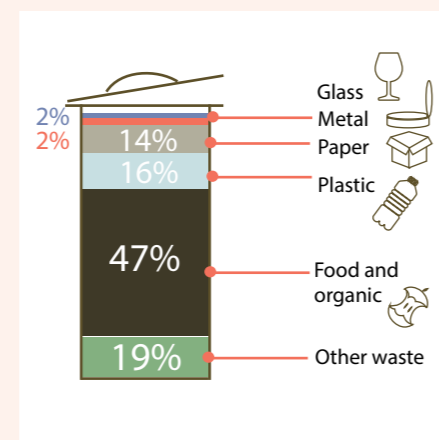
Sound chemicals and waste management is vital for a healthy population and environment. Poor management can lead to various diseases, bodily damages, and increased mortality, and negatively impact water quality, climate change, and biodiversity — and Palestine is no exception. An analysis of the current waste and chemicals situation was conducted to identify priority issues and major gaps and constraints, in addition to the special political circumstances faced. While data collection can sometimes be challenging in Palestine, information was nevertheless provided where possible to understand the main aspects.



## Population growth in Palestine



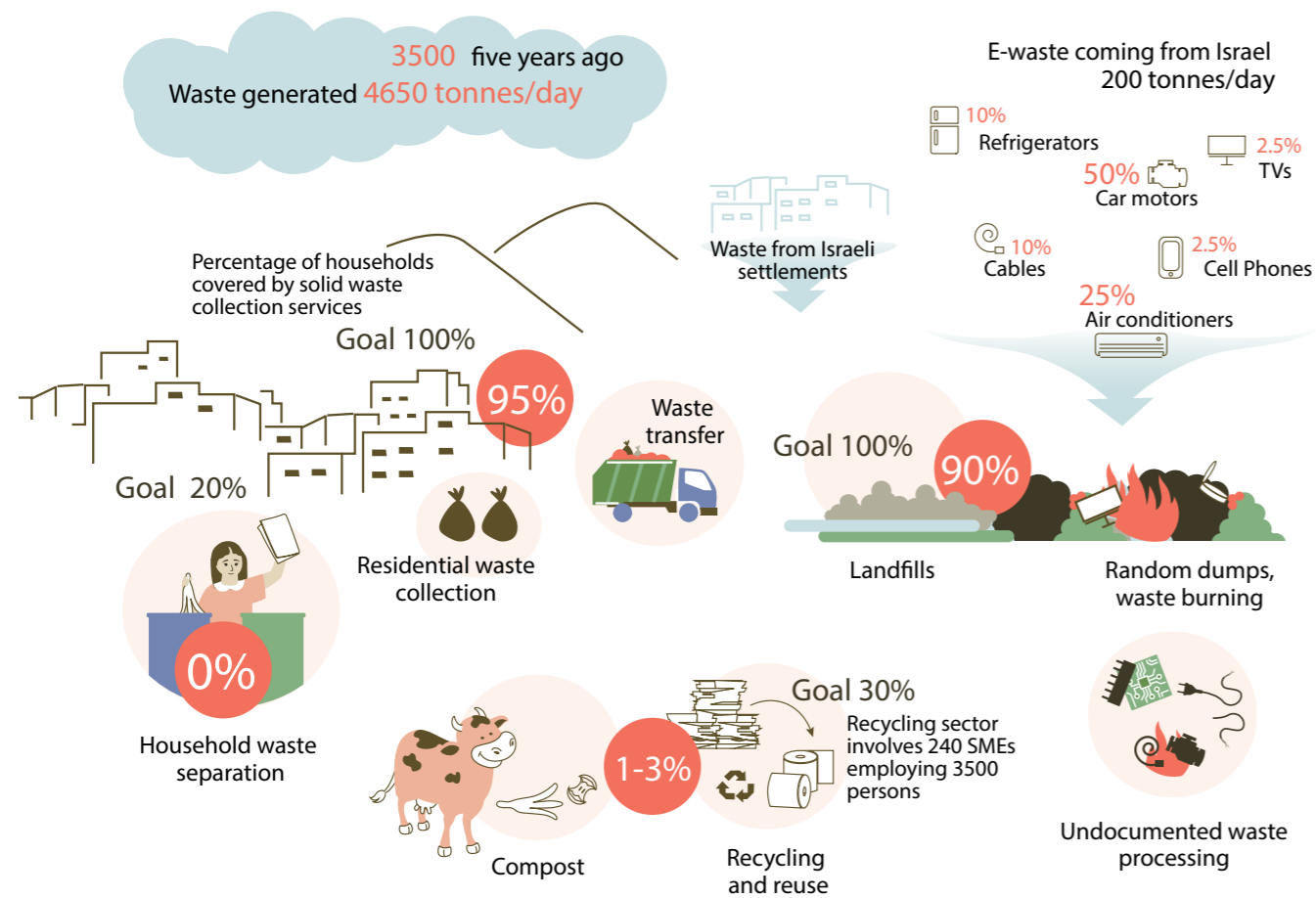
## Solid waste composition



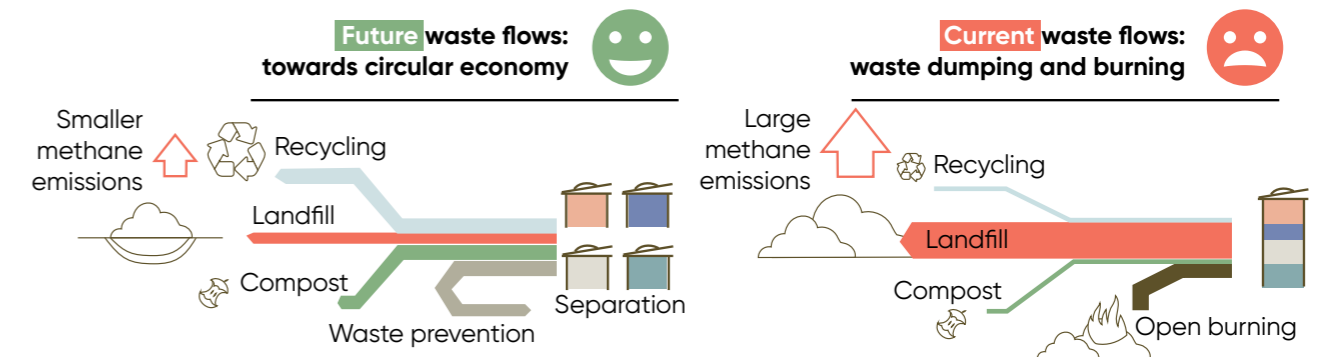
## Solid waste generation



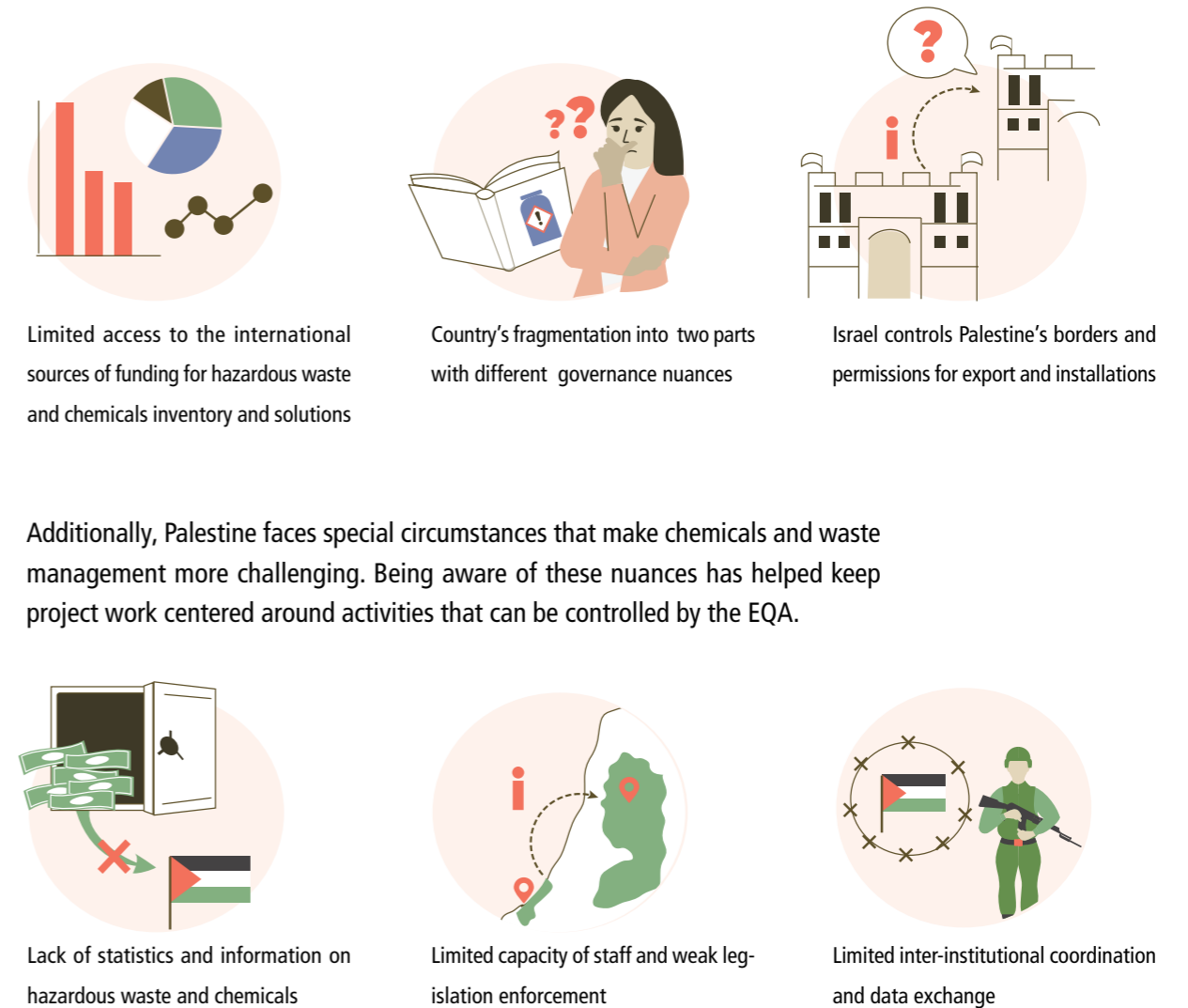
## Where does the solid waste end up?



Currently, waste in Palestine tends to flow toward dumpsites (both formal and informal) or is frequently burned, while little is composted, recycled, or treated. This causes high levels of methane emissions and can be toxic for local populations.



Tackling these issues also means addressing the major institutional gaps and constraints that exist, per the project's analysis. The following major gaps were identified as focal areas of the project:



# National Committee

An inter-agency mechanism was established for the project, incorporating relevant governmental agencies including the EQA, Ministry of Local Government, Customs Police, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of National Economy, and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, who formed the project Steering Committee. The Steering Committee met regularly to review the pressing waste and chemicals issues presented during the project, discuss overlaps for their institutional set-ups, and optimize governance. An Action Plan for improved governance was presented to the Steering Committee, including the permanent establishment of a cross-sectoral National Committee on chemicals and waste, and the priorities and next steps for institutional cooperation.

## Inter-agency cooperation and involvement on waste and chemicals

### Central Bureau of Statistics



Data and statistics on economy, population and the environment

### Ministry of National Economy



Planning, economic activity regulations and licensing

### Ministry of Local Government



Municipal waste management and inventory

### Ministry of Health



Regulations on health protection health surveys

### Ministry of Agriculture



Regulations on agricultural chemicals and safety

### Ministry of Interior: Civil Defence and Customs Police



Inspecting shipments of hazardous waste and chemicals, emergency preparedness and response

# Engaging the public

One of the key gaps identified was a lack of information and understanding on hazardous waste and chemicals, both at the government level and in the general public. A series of awareness-raising materials were developed that showcase key chemicals and waste issues in Palestine, the role of the international conventions, youth and women engagement, and different solutions. The materials are in the form of a brochure, infographics, and posters that can be used for different audiences.

## Youth and women engagement



# Capacity building workshops

The EQA teamed up with the Ministry of Education to target university students in a campaign on waste and chemicals. This campaign included interactive sessions at four main universities in Palestine and worked to sensitize students from environmental sciences on main issues in Palestine and the international conventions.



Events on waste and chemicals at An-Najah National University

Enhancing capacity of staff working on chemicals and waste issues in Palestine was a major component of the UNEP Special Programme project. A benchmarking assessment of Palestine’s capacity was conducted early on in the project, identifying areas to work on for improving legal and regulatory frameworks, capacities for dealing with hazardous waste, and progress on priority chemicals. Aligned with the needs identified, various in-person trainings took place, focusing on sensitization of the situation in Palestine, the requirements of the BRS-M Conventions, inventories, extended producer responsibility, and reporting and information-sharing. Sessions were led by experts from the EQA, BRS Secretariat and Swiss organizations, giving a solid basis for improved understanding of chemicals and waste issues. These training events were well-attended and interactive, allowing the opportunity to discuss next steps and main priorities.



Introduction to Workshop 1 given by Dr. Otto Simonett,  
Director of Zoï Environment Network

**CHEMICALS AND WASTE SELF-TRAINING PROGRAMME:**  
Implementing the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm and Minamata Conventions in Palestine

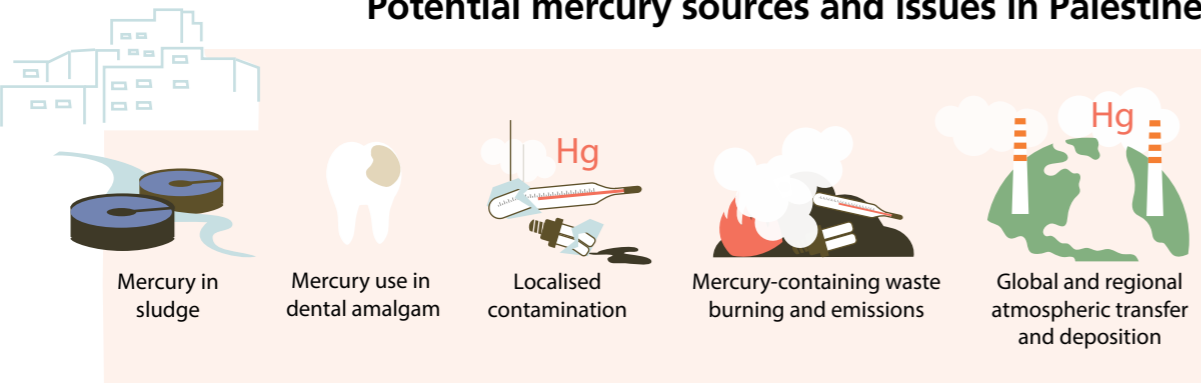
**CHEMICALS AND WASTE TRAINING CATALOG:**  
Resources for Implementing the Basel, Rotterdam, Stockholm, and Minamata Conventions

The workshops were also complemented by online training resources. Under the project, a Training Catalog and Self-Training Programme were developed, which walk users through the array of guidance documents, e-learning courses, and videos available online to assist with implementation of the BRS-M Conventions. These resources are available for future user and include different tracks focusing on specific areas of expertise, such as inventories, implementation, regulation, and more.

# Minamata Convention on Mercury

Palestine acceded to the Minamata Convention on Mercury in 2019, making it the newest chemicals-related convention it has joined. Although mercury is not the highest priority chemical in Palestine, strides were still taken to align its priorities with the other conventions and improve the capacities of the National Focal Point and relevant institutions on mercury. Activities included a hybrid training on mercury, reporting, and inventories; a roadmap toward implementation of the Minamata Convention; and a series of visuals for awareness-raising, adapted to the Palestinian context. In collaboration with this project, Palestine submitted its first National Report to the Minamata Convention Secretariat.

## Potential mercury sources and issues in Palestine



## الاستخدام الأفضل للزئبق

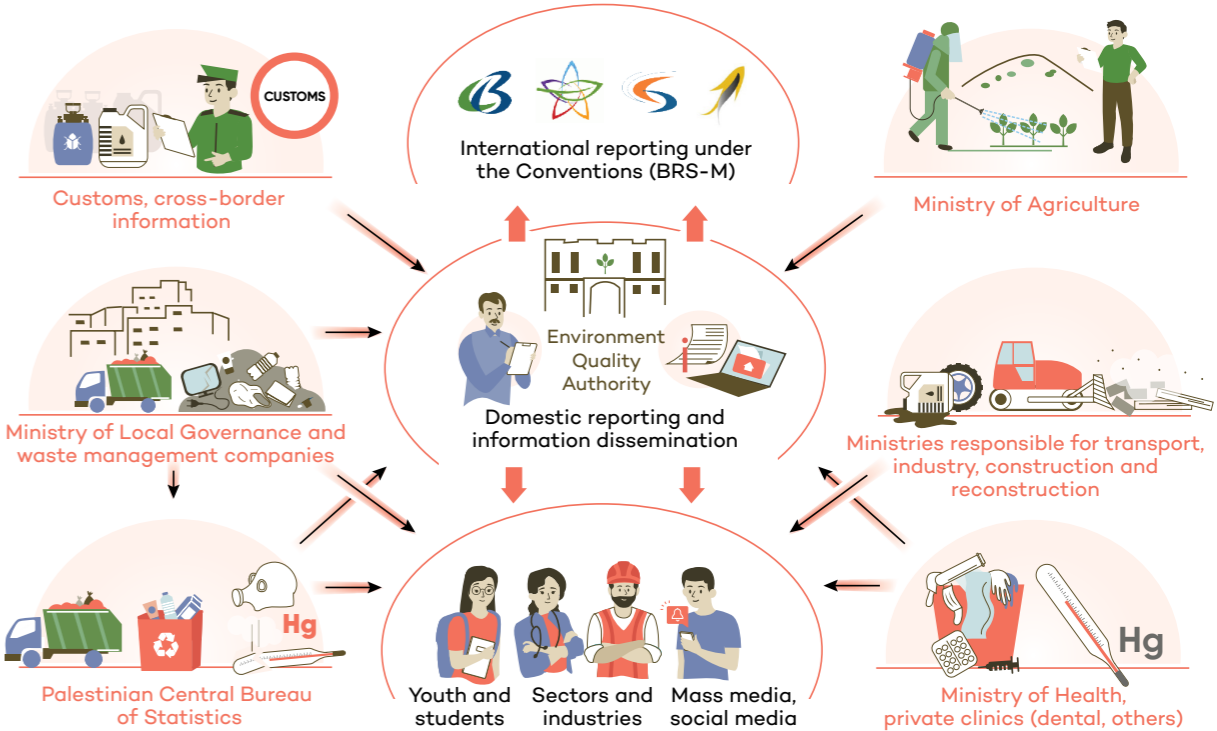
- 1 تعدين السينايباير الخام لإنتاج الزئبق
- 2 توريد الزئبق من عمليات التعدين الأولية
- 3 تجارة الزئبق على الصعيد الدولي
- 4 استخدام الزئبق في صناعات متعددة مثل الكلورين والصودا الكاوية
- 5 انبعاثات الزئبق في الهواء عن طريق حرق الفحم والصناعات الأخرى
- 6 مصابيح الفلورسنت
- 7 منتجات تبييض البشرة
- 8 موازين الحرارة
- 9 مُلغَم الأسنان الزئبقي
- 10 استخدام الزئبق في استخراج الذهب خلال عمليات تعدين الذهب
- 11 تبخير الزئبق عن طريق الحرق للحصول على الذهب
- 12 تسرب الزئبق إلى الأرض والماء
- 13 تخزين مؤقت
- 14 انبعاث الزئبق وإطلاقه من عمليات إدارة النفايات
- 15 تراكم الزئبق في الأسماك عن طريق التغذية على الكائنات الدقيقة
- 16 تعرّض الإنسان للزئبق عن طريق الغذاء

# Information-sharing

Another important component of the project has been improving information-sharing between relevant institutions in Palestine. Given the cross-cutting nature of chemicals and waste management, it is vital that the different government agencies are able to communicate and coordinate among one another. This has benefits for reporting to the international conventions and making processes more efficient.

A roadmap for information-sharing was developed and presented at a High Level Segment with representatives from different ministries and agencies to discuss the vision for Palestine’s chemicals and waste management. The roadmap highlights key areas for sharing information: improved inter-agency collaboration and reporting and staff training and capacity building.

## A Road Map on Palestine’s Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS): collaboration and reporting on waste and chemicals



As conducted during this project, a combination of periodic inter-agency meetings and interactive exchanges and trainings helps to address knowledge gaps, refine responsibilities, and improve reporting quality. Different agencies and stakeholders can support the EQA for reporting and information dissemination in the future.

## A Road Map on Palestine's Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS): **staff training and capacity building**



The ultimate goal of the inter-agency collaboration, domestic and international reporting is to provide information for decision makers and key user groups (local communities, youth, sectors) to reduce their exposure to harmful waste and chemicals, and protect the environment. Through data collection, exchanging and synthesizing data, and staff training on priority areas, capacities will be enhanced and information will be shared more effectively.

## Looking toward the future

The UNEP Special Programme project in Palestine has helped take several important steps in progressing on the sound management of chemicals and waste, paving the way for Palestine's continued engagement on these priority issues. Based on workshop discussions and the analyses conducted, there are some crucial next steps to be taken in order to advance on the remaining gaps:

- Develop a central database for waste and chemicals-related statistics and information, to be accessible to all relevant institutions
- Create an inventory of priority chemicals, including POPs and mercury
- Submit a National Implementation Plan to the Stockholm Convention Secretariat and a Minamata Initial Assessment to the Minamata Convention Secretariat
- Continue meetings of the National Committee to discuss priority issues and collaboration
- Follow online training programmes and raise awareness of waste and chemicals across different sectors and target groups
- Assess updated legal and regulatory systems introduced to ensure gaps are filled and new pollutants are taken into account

Through the enhanced capacities developed in this project, Palestine is better equipped to deal with its most challenging chemicals and waste issues in the country. The shared vision on waste and chemicals management created under this project will allow for more exchange, greater collaboration, and key steps to be taken for a cleaner and safer population and environment.