

Criteria for Twinning with Waterford City & County Council

1. Outline the benefits likely to accrue to the administrative area and the local community

The Waterford - Ramallah relationship started. This relation is strongly powered by the social liaisons existing between both communities

2. The Social, cultural and general interests of the administrative area and the local community

Ramallah, a key city in the West Bank, situated at 16 Km from Jerusalem and 64 Km of the Mediterranean seashore, is located at 860 m on the central mountain ranges of Palestine that extends from southern Galilea down to Hebron through Jerusalem. Thus the city enjoys moderate weather through the summer and cold winters. That makes the city a very pleasant place to live in and visit. Thus its geographical location, on the road that traverses the central mountain range from Nablus to Jerusalem, has given it a commercial value since the middle ages. The total area of Ramallah is of 18600 km² in which lives 70000 inhabitants out of 370000 people living in the whole governorate of Ramallah & Al-Bireh. The city is known for its vibrant life full of cultural and art activities and its very heterogeneous population forming a diverse young cultural cosmopolitan city.

Ramallah also has an increasingly international outlook. Not only it is part of the 100 Resilient Cities Network, but the city also has formal connections with more than 30 cities from all over the globe, such as Toulouse in France, Johannesburg in South Africa, Trondheim in Norway and Amsterdam in Holland. Through these connections Ramallah is represented, shares knowledge and helps implement best practice initiatives for its citizens.

In 1993 Oslo agreements led to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in the West Bank and Gaza Strip which led Local Authorities to incorporate to the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG). Nevertheless Ramallah, as all Palestinian territories still remain under Israeli Occupation where PA control is restrained. As such Ramallah has no control over its natural resources despite its rich water resources.

Following the establishment of the PA, Ramallah became the temporary seat of the Government of the State of Palestine, thus witnessing a rapid growth where only in 7 years the city doubled its built area. The rapid growth formed a challenge for the municipality to upgrade its infrastructure to fit its built landscape.

Ramallah Municipality

Background

Ramallah became a city in 1908. Since then the city has witnessed 25 different municipal councils. Unstable political events led the Municipality to undergo through 5 different regimes therefore it has known 5 different civil codes. In 1967 Ramallah as the rest of the West Bank was occupied by Israeli forces. Occupation critically held back the advancement and development of the Municipality and its services specially that the city was governed by a direct military force and Municipal council was stopped and shut for six years. In 2002 the city of Ramallah was invaded by Israeli military forces which lasted 24 days during which the city suffered heavy material and human loses. The Municipal hall was occupied and sabotaged and many valuable and important documents were stolen and computers were destroyed.

Culture and Tourism

Ramallah is the leading city in Palestine for the cultural scene, as it yearly hosts tens of festivals and hundreds of concerts, exhibitions, movie screenings, and other cultural events.

The commercial sector

Commerce is one of the biggest economic assets to the city. Being a central location in the West Bank, Ramallah attracts a lot of shoppers from all around the country. Number of restaurants per capita in Ramallah is one of the highest in the world, and other commercial places don't fall far behind.

Industry

Ramallah has a small niche of light industry such as the manufacture of sanitary paper, cardboard, furniture, foodstuffs, olive, soap, aluminum, pharmaceuticals and some handicrafts and traditional goods are common in Ramallah. The industrial zone takes up to 4.2 % of the total city area.

Tertiary industry has got a central role in the city's economy as the majority of service companies in the country lay in Ramallah. For example one of the telecommunication companies is the biggest employer in the country(after the government). This augments the city's employment opportunity and demand and rises minimum wage above the national average.

Architecture and urban planning

The city of Ramallah is characterized by its architectural richness and its social development, which is reflected through its buildings, neighbourhoods and inhabitants. The city is the largest in terms of the number of old buildings in the governorate of Ramallah, with 381 old buildings, constituting 5% of the total number of buildings in the governorate.

Ramallah Municipality along with its partners prepared a plan to preserve the cultural heritage of the old town of Ramallah. The borders and all categories of cultural heritage in the historical

area (historical buildings, courtyards, alleys, etc.) have been set, based on the field study carried out by the on-site team.

One of the biggest challenges facing Ramallah is the planification of urban expansion as the growth of population is around 7%, that is double the normal ratio. Thus expansion is accelerated but the urban area is limited, specially that a good part of the city's territory is classified as area C by Israeli occupation and therefor is prohibited to be used for urban purposes.

Energy and electricity

Ramallah and other Palestinian cities import all their fuel needs (Oil needs) from Israel and imports 90% of its electricity needs, mostly from Israel. Most of the houses in the city of Ramallah are connected to electricity.

The electricity grid suffers from many ongoing threats from the Israeli side as a major source of electricity purchases, and suffers from an increase in the percentage of technical and non-technical losses in the network

3. Proposed budget implications for the year with programme of events for the coming year from each twinning group (may need to outline what activities will be covered)

Potential action plan for a year of cooperation between Waterford and Ramallah in the fields of sport, youth, exchange of expertise, culture, human rights, and social inclusion:

Sport:

- Organize a boxing and football tournament featuring teams from both Waterford and Ramallah. This could involve arranging for transportation and accommodations for the visiting teams, as well as securing a venue for the tournament.
- Invite coaches and trainers from both cities to exchange expertise and hold training sessions for local athletes.

Youth:

- Facilitate mutual visits between young people from Waterford and Ramallah. This could involve organizing cultural exchange programs, language classes, and other activities to promote understanding and friendship between the two groups.
- Set up a mentorship program that connects young people from both cities with local professionals in various fields.

Exchange of expertise:

- Hold regular videoconferences between experts in various fields, such as education, health care, and business, to share knowledge and experience.
- Organize workshops and seminars in both Waterford and Ramallah to facilitate the exchange of expertise.

Culture:

- Participate in each other's city festivals by sending delegations or showcasing local cultural traditions.
- Invite artists, musicians, and other cultural figures from both cities to perform or exhibit their work.

Human rights:

- Connect local NGOs working on human rights issues in Waterford and Ramallah, and facilitate the exchange of information and resources.
- Organize events and campaigns to raise awareness of human rights issues in both cities.

Social inclusion:

- Work with parishes and schools in both Waterford and Ramallah to promote social inclusion and understanding between different cultural and religious groups.
- Organize events and activities that bring people from different backgrounds together, such as community service projects, cultural festivals, and sporting events.

4. Estimated budget:

item	items	cost per item	costs
Sport			
Flights	8 people x 4 round tickets	\$300/round ticket	\$4,800
Accommodation costs	8 people x 6 nights	\$100/night	\$2,400
Total			\$7,200
Youth			
Flights	4 people x 2 round tickets	\$300/round ticket	\$2,400
Accommodation costs	4 people x 3 nights	\$100/night	\$1,200
Total			\$3,600
Grand Total			\$10,800

This is just a rough estimate, and the actual costs may vary depending on the specific details of the activities and the resources needed. It is important to carefully consider all potential costs and budget accordingly to ensure that the cooperation is successful and sustainable

5. Details of committee members and who will be involved

Name	Association	Type of cooperation
Nader Jayousi	El Barrio Gym	Sport exchange in boxing St. Saviours club
Bassam Rabah	Chamber of Commerce & Industry	Exchange between chambers of commerce any kind of commerce. facilitate product exchange.
Holy Family Catholic Church		Connect them with parishes in Waterford
St. Andrews Espiscopal Church	Rev. Fadi Diab	
Annahda Womens Association	George Rantisi	
Islamic Club	Amena Zahran & Khader Froukh & issa salameh	Cultural dep in the club to empower women and professional workshop
Surreyet Ramallah-Ramallah First Club	Khaled Elleyen	Contemporary art & sports

6. Waterford Committee Members

David Rees (IPSC) - Chair

Sharon Walsh (Manor St. John Youth Services) - Secretary

Brian Partridge (St. Saviour's Boxing Club, local schoolteacher)

Michelle Byrne (Waterford Council of Trade Unions)

Cllr. Conor McGuinness

Cllr. Joe Kelly

Cllr. Seamus Ryan