

Policy subject: Local Aquatic Ecosystems Stewardship Policy	Policy number: 61/P.D/2024	Date of last revision: 2024/11/15
Implementing body: Administrative Affairs Department	Implementing start date: 2024/11/20	Policy reference: Planning and Development Department

Overview: Palestine Ahliya University (PAU) is dedicated to safeguarding local aquatic ecosystems by implementing effective monitoring, protection, and collaborative management programs. Recognizing the vital role of aquatic ecosystems in biodiversity and water resource sustainability, PAU actively engages with the local community and other stakeholders to foster a culture of environmental responsibility and sustainable water resource management.

Objectives:

➤ **Enhance Environmental Monitoring:**

Improve the health of local aquatic ecosystems by adopting advanced environmental monitoring tools and methodologies.

➤ **Strengthen Community Collaboration:**

Engage with local stakeholders to implement sustainable watershed management practices that protect water resources and support biodiversity.

➤ **Ensure Sustainability:**

Develop and enforce effective protection mechanisms for aquatic ecosystems, ensuring the preservation of water resources and their contribution to biodiversity conservation.

Scope:

This policy applies to all university-led initiatives aimed at protecting and sustaining local aquatic ecosystems, including rivers, streams, and other freshwater bodies in Bethlehem and the surrounding areas. It encompasses:

1. Environmental monitoring and assessment of local aquatic ecosystems.
2. Community engagement in sustainable watershed management.
3. Educational and research activities focused on water sustainability and biodiversity.

Statements:

PAU commits to actively contributing to the sustainability of local aquatic ecosystems by monitoring their environmental health, collaborating with the local community for effective watershed management, and advancing innovative solutions that enhance biodiversity conservation and water resource sustainability.

Procedures:

1. Identify Target Ecosystems and Watersheds:

- Inventory and classify water bodies and watersheds related to or near the university, such as rivers, ponds, and aquatic areas.
- Prioritize ecosystems and watersheds based on their environmental significance and the impact of university activities.

2. Set Monitoring and Management Standards:

- Develop indicators to measure water quality, aquatic organism health, and biodiversity, using global standards and advanced tools.
- Create a comprehensive management plan for watersheds that focuses on water resource protection, biodiversity conservation, and minimizing negative impacts.

3. Conduct Monitoring Activities:

- Perform regular visits to collect water samples and analyze them in specialized laboratories.
- Monitor changes in biodiversity, including species of fish, plants, and aquatic invertebrates.

4. Analyze Data and Apply Improvement Measures:

- Analyze monitoring results to detect ecosystem degradation and identify areas for improvement.
- Develop and implement plans to rehabilitate ecosystems and prevent further pollution, including waste management and reducing harmful discharges.

5. Collaborate with Partners and Local Communities:

- Work with government agencies, environmental organizations, and research institutions to enhance ecosystem quality.
- Engage local communities in the development and implementation of watershed management plans, forming joint committees to coordinate efforts.

6. Awareness and Education:

- Organize workshops and events to raise awareness among students, staff, and local communities about the importance of preserving aquatic ecosystems and watersheds.
- Involve students in monitoring campaigns as part of their academic activities and encourage community involvement in sustainable practices.

7. Monitor, Evaluate, and Report Performance:

- Establish indicators to evaluate the effectiveness of ecosystem and watershed management, such as water quality and biodiversity.
- Prepare periodic reports to assess progress, share findings, and recommend further actions.

KPIs:

- Change rate in aquatic health indicators.
- Number of community-partnered watershed management projects.