



State of Israel
State Comptroller and Ombudsman
Audit Reports on Municipalities 2020

Selected Issues in the Water Infrastructure in Samaria

Abstract

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Background

There is one water company operating in Samaria (Shomron), Yuvalim Shomron 2003 Ltd., which serves two local authorities - the Ariel Municipality and the Karnei Shomron Local Council. The six other local authorities in Samaria provide water and sewage services to their residents by themselves. In recent years, there have been many interruptions in the supply of water in most towns in Samaria due to several reasons, primarily infrastructures that remained unattended in recent decades, and a significant increase in water consumption due to the population's growth that was not accompanied by a parallel growth in water sources.

Key figures

463,000

Number of residents in Jewish towns in Judea and Samaria at the end of 2019 (100,000 of them in Samaria). By 2030, their number is expected to increase to 580,000 people.

NIS¹ 150.6 million

Consumption of freshwater by both Palestinians and Israelis in 2020. It is estimated that by 2030 the consumption will reach 212.9 cubic meters.

5%

Depreciation in the Israeli water supply systems in Judea and Samaria (according to the water master plan), compared to 30% in Palestinian systems.

NIS 0.30

The tariff established by the water company in Samaria for a cubic meter of water up to the allowed quantity (3.5 cubic meter/month/person). NIS 3.37 is the cost established by the water company in Samaria for one cubic meter of water above the allowed quantity.

NIS 0.468-2.272

The cost of one cubic meter of water for unincorporated authorities up to the allowed amount; the cost above the allowed quantity ranges from NIS 5.583 to NIS 7.387 per cubic meter.

1 As of December 31, 2019 1 US dollar = 3.45 NIS



13,492 meters

Length of the water pipes deployed in Kedumim more than 30 years ago. In 2019 this segment represented 66% of the total length of the pipes (20,365 meters).

22%

Percentage of people that take advantage of a discount in the payment for water in the Oranit Local Council in 2019, compared to 83% of people who take advantage of the benefit in all local authorities in Israel

NIS 741 million

Total investment required until 2030 to supply the expected water requirements.

NIS 50,000

The amount of savings resulting from a reduction of 1% in water depreciation by Yuvalim in 2018.

Audit actions







In the second half of 2019, the State Comptroller's Office conducted an audit of selected issues in the water infrastructure, in particular in four local councils in the Shomron: Oranit, Alfei Menashe, Elkana and Kedumim. Supplementary audit activities were performed at the Israel Water Authority, Mekorot - Israel's National Water Company Ltd., and Yuvalim Shomron 2003 Ltd.

Key findings



Interruptions in water supply: Until 2018, most of the settlements in Samaria suffered from interruptions in water supply, especially in the hot summer months. This was due primarily to the depletion of water reservoirs in the region over the years, failure to improve infrastructures, a significant increase in the consumption of water, and water theft. In 2018, the Water Authority and Mekorot began taking care of the supply of water in the Karnei Shomron local council.



-  **Water company:** Except for two, Samarian local authorities are not incorporated into water companies. The cost of a cubic meter of water paid to Mekorot by the six unincorporated local authorities in the region is higher than the cost of a cubic meter paid by the other authorities, which did incorporate into a water company. The efforts to create a water company in Samaria ceased at the end of 2015
-  **Master water supply plan:** The local councils of Oranit and Alfei Menashe did not complete the preparation of a master plan for the supply of water to their jurisdiction. The local councils of Kedumim and Elkana did prepare a plan (in 1998 and 2007 respectively), but these were not updated despite the fact that the rate of water depreciation in those councils in the years 2014 to 2018 reached 13% and 24% compared to the national average of 10.5%
-  **Water depreciation:** The annual financial loss suffered by the three local authorities in Samaria due to the high level of water depreciation ranged from NIS 140,000 to NIS 800,000 per year.
-  **Discounts:** The percentage of residents who take advantage of the water discount to which they are entitled in the three local authorities of Samaria in 2019 was less than 50%, compared to 83% in all local authorities in Israel.



Water quality: The quality of the water supplied by Yuvalim and by the six other local authorities to their residents through Mekorot was proper. Tests carried out by the Ministry of Health did not find deficiencies in the quality of drinking water.

Information to the population: On their website, Yuvalim publishes information about the quality and price of the water. Residents of Ariel and Karnei Shomron can also submit online complaints about malfunctions in the supply of water. Recently, the Kedumim Local Council has begun doing similar work. However, the websites of four local councils do not offer the option to file complaints about water malfunctions.

Key recommendations

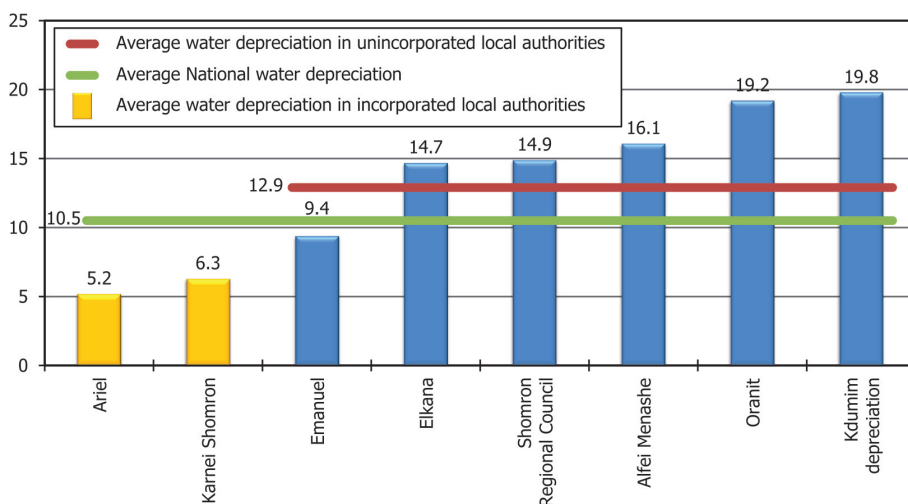
-  It is recommended that the Water Authority and Mekorot make all efforts to complete the program for the development of Mekorot as soon as possible. This will enable execution of the master plan prepared by the Water Authority to strengthen the water and sewage sectors in Judea and Samaria.
-  It is recommended that the Ministry of Finance, the Water Authority and Yuvalim in Samaria work together with the local authorities that provide water and sewage services, and that with the assistance of the Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Interior, This will enable them to formulate a model that will be suitable for the local authorities in Samaria.

- 💡 It is recommended that the local authorities in Samaria make all possible efforts to reduce the rate of depreciation of water in their jurisdictions. It is recommended that the Water Authority provides guidelines to the authorities regarding ways to reduce water waste.
- 💡 It is recommended that the local authorities in Samaria, in particular the local councils of Oranit, Alfei Menashe and Emanuel, work together to identify the residents entitled to water discounts who do not take advantage of them. It is also recommended that the Water Authority, in coordination with the Ministry of Interior, work with the authorities to encourage residents to take advantage of the discount in accordance with the entitlement guidelines.

Summary

The findings indicate deficiencies in the provision of water services to residents of Samaria, which must be managed at both the national and the local authorities' levels. The Water Authority and Mekorot must work closely with the local authorities and Yuvalim to improve the supply of water. This should include major improvements to the infrastructures aimed at reducing water waste on the one hand, and increasing water sources on the other.

Average water depreciation in local authorities in Samaria, 2015-2018



According to data provided by the Water Authority in March 2020, which was processed by the State Comptroller's Office