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How Much Water Did the Oslo II Agreement Allocate?

Article 40 of the 1995 Interim Agreement made 28.6 mcm a year available and estimated future West Bank needs at 70 to 80 mcm.

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The Interim Agreement of 28 September 1995 made 28.6 million cubic metres of water a year available to the Palestinian

side during the interim period, and estimated future Palestinian needs in the West Bank at between 70 and 80 million cubic metres a year. Both figures sit in Article 40 of Appendix 1 to Annex III, signed by the Government of the State of Israel and the PLO, which leaves the balance to be developed rather than allocated.

Figure	What it counts	Period
28.6 mcm per year	Water the agreement makes available to the Palestinian side, itemised across seven named commitments	The interim period, from 28 September 1995
70 to 80 mcm per year	Future Palestinian needs in the West Bank, as both sides agreed to estimate them	Stated 28 September 1995
41.4 to 51.4 mcm per year	The balance the agreement leaves to be developed by the Palestinian side from the Eastern Aquifer and other agreed sources	The interim period
5 mcm per year	Water Israel undertakes to supply to the Gaza Strip, inside the 28.6 total	The interim period
679 mcm per year	Total average annual recharge across the three aquifers, on the agreement's own data	Average annual estimates
3 months	The period within which the Joint Water Committee was to prepare a schedule of extraction quotas	From 28 September 1995

Source: Israel and the PLO, the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Annex III, Appendix 1, Article 40 and Schedules 8 to 11.

The recognition of water rights and the deferral are one paragraph

Paragraph 1 of Article 40 has two sentences and they travel together. The Interim Agreement states: “Israel recognizes the Palestinian water rights in the West Bank. These will be negotiated

in the permanent status negotiations and settled in the Permanent Status Agreement relating to the various water resources.”

The Interim Agreement records that ownership of the water and sewage infrastructure is deferred the same way, to the permanent status negotiations. Quoting either sentence of paragraph 1 without the other reverses what the paragraph does.

The 28.6 mcm is seven itemised commitments, not a lump sum

The Interim Agreement states each destination in paragraph 7, splitting the total between an Israeli commitment and a Palestinian responsibility.

Commitment	Quantity	Side responsible
Hebron and Bethlehem	1 mcm per year	Israel
Ramallah	0.5 mcm per year	Israel
Salfit	0.6 mcm per year	Israel
Nablus	1 mcm per year	Israel
A new Jenin well	1.4 mcm per year	Israel
The Gaza Strip	5 mcm per year	Israel
A Nablus well	2.1 mcm per year	Palestinian

Commitment	Quantity	Side responsible
Hebron, Bethlehem and Ramallah, from the Eastern Aquifer or other agreed sources	17 mcm per year	Palestinian

Source: Israel and the PLO, Interim Agreement, Annex III, Appendix 1, Article 40, paragraph 7.

The widely quoted 118 mcm figure is arithmetic, not text

The number most often given as the Palestinian allocation under Oslo II appears nowhere in the agreement. It is the sum of the six Palestinian lines in Schedule 10: 24 and 30 from the Eastern Aquifer, 25 and 17 from the North-Eastern, and 20 and 2 from the Western. The corresponding Israeli sum is 483 and the undeveloped Eastern remainder is 78, which is how the totals reach 679.

The Interim Agreement publishes only the three aquifer totals and the recharge figure, so every ratio built from them is the citer's own division.

Schedule 10 is headed Data Concerning Aquifers

The schedule most often cited as the allocation is not one. The Interim Agreement records it as "Data Concerning Aquifers" and closes it with the line "All figures are average annual estimates."

Aquifer	Total	Composition, on the agreement's own figures
Eastern	172 mcm	40 to Israeli users from wells; 24 to Palestinians from wells; 30 to Palestinians from springs; 78 remaining to be developed
North-Eastern	145 mcm	103 to Israeli users from the Gilboa and Beisan springs including wells; 25 to Palestinian users around Jenin; 17 from East Nablus springs
Western	362 mcm	340 used within Israel; 20 to Palestinians; 2 to Palestinians from springs near Nablus

Source: Israel and the PLO, Interim Agreement, Annex III, Appendix 1, Article 40, Schedule 10.

The quota schedule was to be produced within 3 months

The Interim Agreement records that the aquifer figures “shall constitute the basis and guidelines for the operation and decisions” of the Joint Water Committee. The quota schedule is a different document, which the Committee was to prepare within three months of signing and update yearly.

The Joint Water Committee decides by consensus, agenda included

The Interim Agreement states that the Joint Water Committee is established for the interim period with an equal number of representatives from each side, and that “All decisions of the JWC shall be reached by consensus, including the agenda, its procedures and other matters.”

The Interim Agreement records that approval as prior and mandatory in both directions: all licensing and drilling of new

wells, any increase of extraction, and all development of water resources and systems, by either side. It states no fewer than five Joint Supervision and Enforcement Teams for the West Bank under the Committee's control, with access to water and sewage facilities including privately owned ones.

Article 40 governs the West Bank, and Gaza sits under Schedule 11

The Interim Agreement states the Joint Water Committee's remit as water and sewage in the West Bank, and leaves Gaza's prior arrangements unchanged in paragraph 25. Schedule 11 records those arrangements, giving the Palestinian Council operation and development of Gaza's water systems with one carve-out for the systems supplying the settlements and the military installation area.

Present-day Gaza figures belong to other records. COGAT reported facilitating more than 70,000 cubic metres of water per day as at July 2026, on its own count and excluding local wells, outside Article 40 entirely.

Where these figures come from

Every figure here is quoted from the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement of 28 September 1995, in the English text published by Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a party to it. The agreement is bilateral, so the citation runs to both parties.

Lists A1, A2 and B are referenced in the agreement but not reproduced in that published text, so no quantity from any list appears here. The 118 mcm in general circulation is a sum of Schedule 10 lines and is presented above as that. The COGAT water figure in the Gaza section is that body's own count of its own activity and is not part of the agreement.

Questions

How much water did Oslo II allocate to the Palestinian side?

28.6 million cubic metres a year during the interim period. The Interim Agreement states seven named commitments in paragraph 7 of Article 40.

What did the agreement estimate future Palestinian needs to be?

The Interim Agreement estimates between 70 and 80 million cubic metres a year in the West Bank, a figure both sides agreed to.

Where does the often-quoted 118 mcm come from?

It is the sum of the six Palestinian lines in Schedule 10, and it appears nowhere in the agreement text.

Does the agreement recognise Palestinian water rights?

The Interim Agreement states in paragraph 1 that Israel recognizes the Palestinian water rights in the West Bank, and in the same paragraph defers them to the permanent status negotiations.

What is Schedule 10?

Data. The Interim Agreement records it as “Data Concerning Aquifers” and states that all figures in it are average annual estimates.

Who decides on new wells?

The Joint Water Committee. The Interim Agreement states its prior approval is required for new wells and any increase in extraction, by either side.

How does the Committee vote?

By consensus on everything, including the agenda, with an equal number of representatives from each side.

Was a schedule of extraction quotas ever produced?

Schedule 8 required one within three months of signing, updated yearly. It is a separate document from the aquifer data.

Does Article 40 cover Gaza?

No. It governs the West Bank. Paragraph 25 leaves Gaza’s prior arrangements unchanged and Schedule 11 records them.

Is there any Gaza figure inside Article 40?

One. The Interim Agreement records 5 million cubic metres a year to the Gaza Strip, which it states will in future come from desalination in Israel.

Sources

- Israel and the PLO, 1995. The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Annex III, Appendix 1, Article 40 and Schedules 8 to 11.
- Government of the State of Israel and the PLO, 1994. Protocol on Economic Relations, and its 1995 Supplement.
- COGAT, 2026. Humanitarian Situation Report During the Ceasefire.

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