

# Marda Village Profile



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## *Acknowledgments*

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## Background

This report is part of a series of booklets, which contain compiled information about each city, town, and village in the Salfit Governorate. These booklets came as a result of a comprehensive study of all localities in Salfit Governorate, which aims at depicting the overall living conditions in the governorate and presenting developmental plans to assist in developing the livelihood of the population in the area. It was accomplished through the "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment;" the project funded by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation for Development (AECID).

The "Village Profiles and Needs Assessment" was designed to study, investigate, analyze and document the socio-economic conditions and the needed programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current unsecure political, economic and social conditions in Salfit Governorate.

The project's objectives are to survey, analyze, and document the available natural, human, socioeconomic and environmental resources, and the existing limitations and needs assessment for the development of the rural and marginalized areas in Salfit Governorate. In addition, the project aims at preparing strategic developmental programs and activities to mitigate the impact of the current political, social, and economic instability with the focus on the agricultural sector.

All locality profiles in Arabic and English are available online at <http://vprofile.arij.org>.

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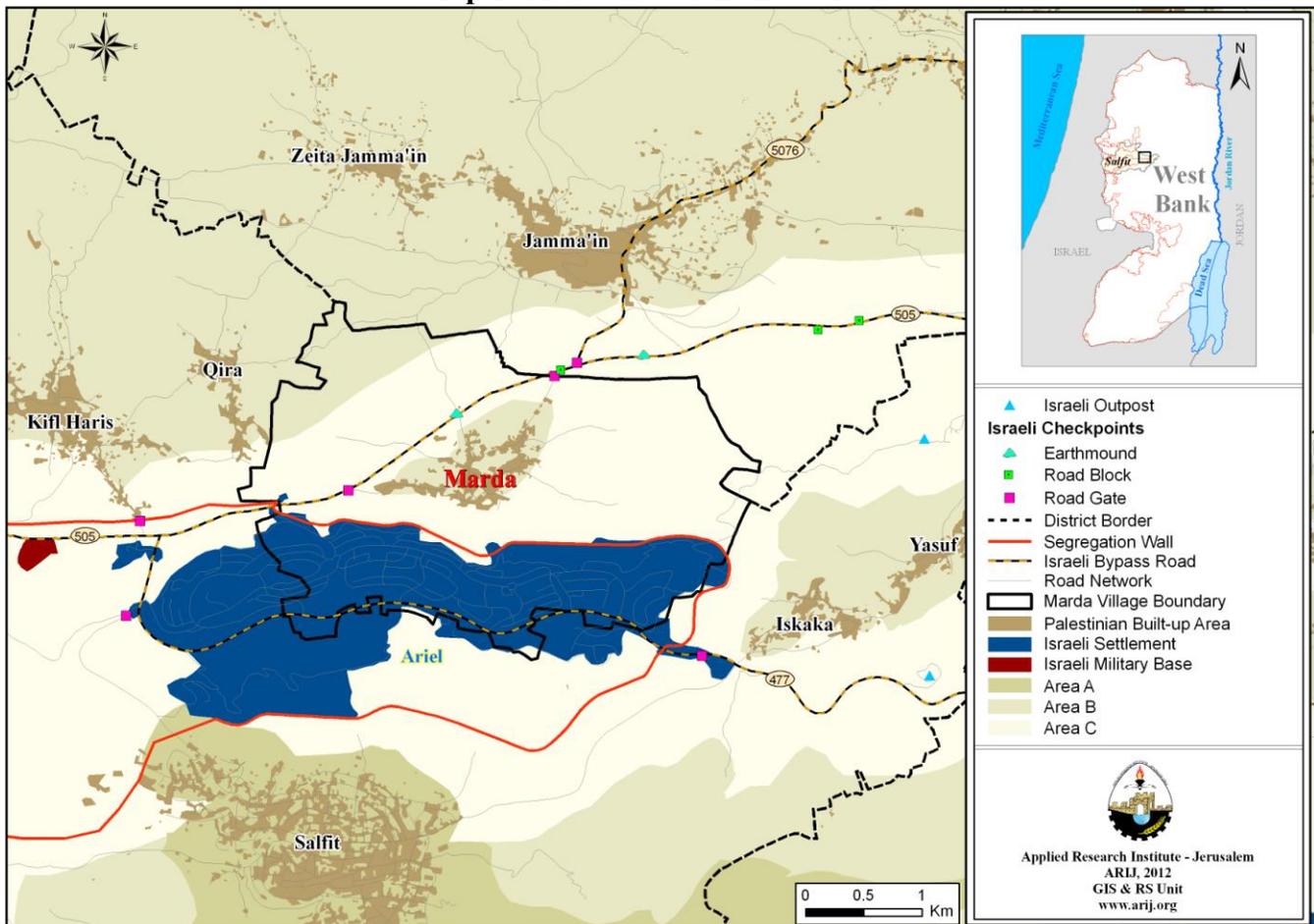
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# Marda Village Profile

## Location and Physical Characteristics

Marda is a Palestinian village in the Salfit Governorate located 3.6 km north of Salfit City. It is bordered by Iskaka and Jamma'in villages to the east, Salfit city to the south, Kifl Haris and Qira villages to the west, and Jamma'in village to the north (ARIJ-GIS, 2013) (See Map 1).

Map 1: Marda location and borders



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2013.

Marda is located at an altitude of 449 m above sea level with a mean annual rainfall of 645 mm. The average annual temperature is 18 C° and the average annual humidity is approximately 60.7% (ARIJ-GIS, 2013).

Since 2005, Marda has been governed by a Village Council which is currently administrated by 8 members appointed by the Palestinian National Authority. There are also 3 employees working in the

council, which owns a permanent headquarters that is included within the ‘Joint Services Council of East Salfit.’ The Council however does not own a vehicle for the collection of solid waste (Marda Village Council, 2012).

It is the responsibility of the Village Council to provide a number of services to the residents of Marda, including (Marda Village Council, 2012):

- The establishment and maintenance of the drinking water and electricity networks.
- Waste collection, road construction and restoration, and social development services.
- The organization of construction and licensing processes.
- Implementation of projects and studies for the village.
- Protection of historical and archeological sites in the village.
- Protection of governmental properties.
- Provision of offices for governmental services.
- Provision of transportation.
- Provision of educational kindergartens.

## History

Marda village’s name is derived from the syriac word “Marida” which has a number of potential meanings. Some translations cite its definition as the ‘fortified place,’ with others claiming that it could mean a rebellion or disobedience. Finally some claim it’s meaning is ‘flat earth.’ Additionally, it was said that its citizens were beautiful looking people with no hair growing on their faces. However, the Islamic biographer and geographer Yaqut al Hamawi claims that the village’s name derives from the word “Rada,” meaning ‘death’ or could be the terms for aa cameo (jewel) called Marda.

The village was established in 817 AH (1396 AD), which is the birth year of the scientist Ali Ben Sulaiman al Mardawi. Its residents however are descendent from the historical groups of Al Jama’iniyat (Marda Village Council, 2012).

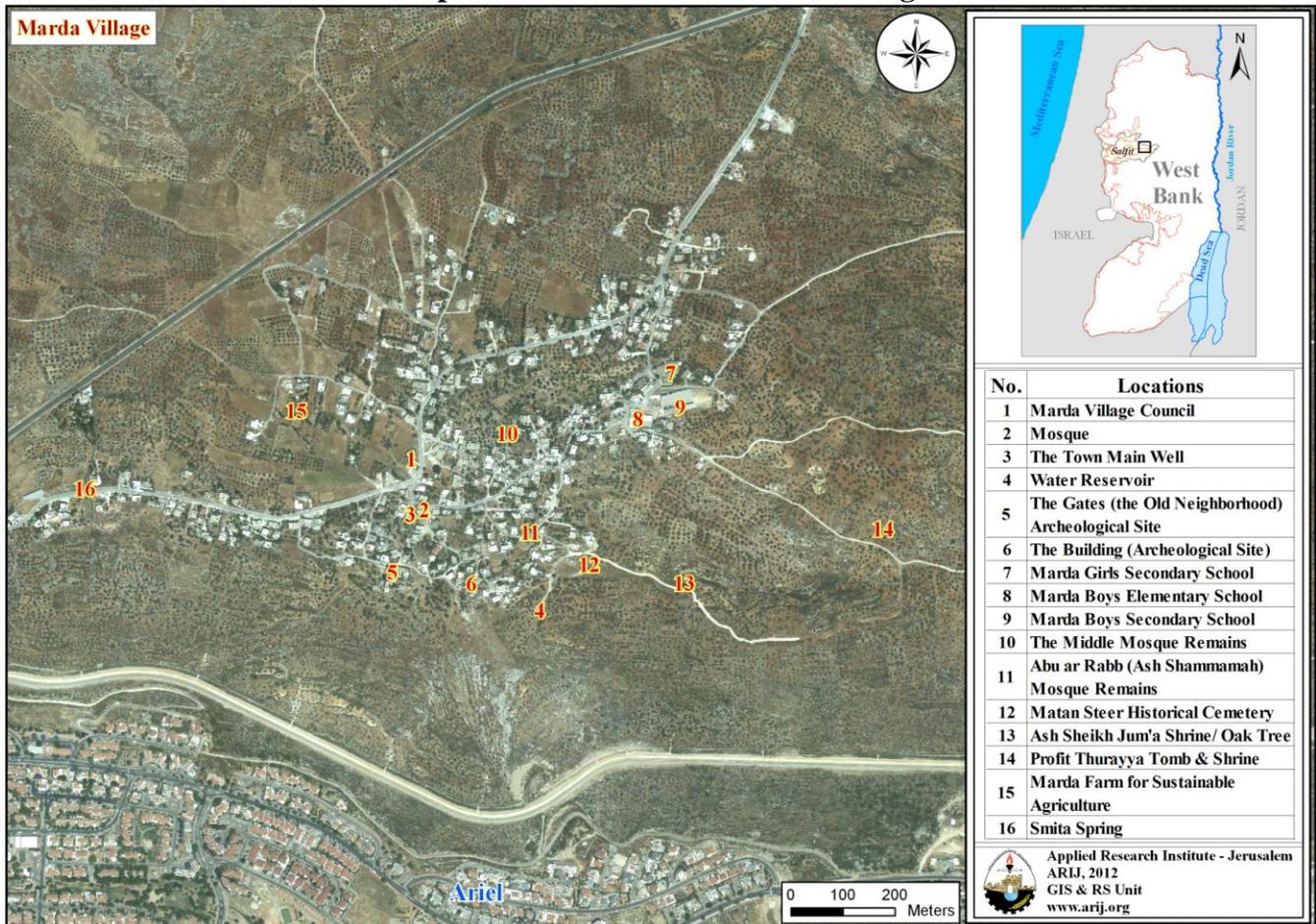
Photo of Marda



## Religious and Archaeological Sites

There is only one mosque in the village called Marda Mosque. The village has several sites of archaeological interest including: Prophet Thurayya Shrine, Ash Sheikh Jum'a Shrine, Prophet Shushu Shrine and Ash Sheikh Badr Shrine. All of these sites are qualified for tourism as determined by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiques (Marda Village Council, 2012) (See Map 2).

Map 2: Main locations in Marda Village



Population Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2013.

## Population

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the total population of Marda in 2007 was 1,967, of whom 979 were male and 988 female. There were 348 households registered as living in 382 housing units.

## Age Groups and Gender

The General Census of Population and Housing carried out by PCBS in 2007 showed the distribution of age groups in Marda is as follows: 38.3% were less than 15 years of age, 57.1% were between 15 and 64 years of age, and 4.4% were 65 years of age or older. Data also showed that the sex ratio of males to females in the village is 99.1:100, meaning that males and females constitute 49.8% and 50.2% of the population, respectively.

## Families

Marda residents are from several families, including Al Khafsh, Ibdah, Sulaiman, Mansoor, Abu Shamma, Sa'id, Ma'tooq, Ibrahim, Al Bara'shi and Mujeer families (Marda Village Council, 2012).

## Immigration

The field survey conducted by ARIJ staff showed that around 200 persons (from different families) have left the village since Al Aqsa Intifada in 2000 (Marda Village Council, 2012).

## Education

According to the results of the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, the illiteracy rate among Marda population is approximately 7.2%, of whom 84.7% are females. Of the literate population, 10.4% could only read and write, with no formal education, 22.8% had elementary education, 30.1% had preparatory education, 18.3% had secondary education, and 11.2% completed higher education. Table 1 shows the educational level in the village of Marda by sex and educational attainment in 2007.

**Table 1: Marda population (10 years and above) by sex and educational attainment**

Sex	Illite- rate	Can read & write	Element- ary	Preparat- ory	Second- ary	Associate Diploma	Bachelor	Higher Diploma	Master	PhD	Un- known	Total
M	16	69	167	239	136	29	57	0	4	2	0	<b>719</b>
F	89	82	164	198	130	34	36	0	0	0	0	<b>733</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,452</b>

Source: PCBS, 2009.

There are three public schools in the village all of which are run by the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education (Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012) (see Table 2).

**Table 2: Schools in Marda by name, stage, sex, and supervising authority (2011/2012)**

School Name	Supervising Authority	Sex
Marda Co-educated Secondary School	Government	Mixed
Marda Girls' Secondary School	Government	Female
Marda Boys' Elementary School	Government	Male

Source: Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012

In the village there are 567 students, 44 teachers, and 26 classes. The average number of students per teacher in the school is nearly 13, whilst the average number of students per class is approximately 22 (Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012).

There are three kindergartens in Marda village run by a private organization (Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012) (See table 3 below).

**Table 3: Kindergartens in Marda village by name and supervising authority**

Name of Kindergarten	No. of Classes	No. of Teachers	Supervising Authority
Tuyoor al Jannah Kindergarten	2	2	Private
Atfal al Hanan (Marda) Kindergarten	1	1	Private
Ajyal Kindergarten	1	1	Private

**Source:** Directorate of Education in Salfit, 2012

The educational sector in Marda village faces a number of obstacles, mainly (Marda Village Council, 2012):

1. The existence of partial checkpoints that sporadically hinder the access of students and teachers into schools, mainly Marda Co-educated School.
2. Israeli occupation forces closing the iron gates established on the village entrances thus hindering the students and teachers' movement and causing them to be late for their work.

## Health Status

Marda has one health center coordinated by the Health Work Committees, a governmental mother and child care center, a medical laboratory supervised by an NGO, two private general physicians clinics and a private dental clinic. In the absence of required health services or in emergencies, patients are transferred to Yasir Arafat Governmental Hospital in Salfit city (7 km away) or to the National Hospital in Nablus city (17 km away) (Marda Village Council, 2012).

The health sector in the village faces a number of obstacles and problems, principally (Marda Village Council, 2012):

- The existence of partial checkpoints and the closure of the iron gates established on the village entrances which hinders the access of medical staff and medicines to the health center.
- The lack of medicines available at the health center.
- The lack of a resident physician and a medical staff to work 24 hours a day in the health center in order to receive emergency cases.
- The lack of an ambulance.

## Economic Activities

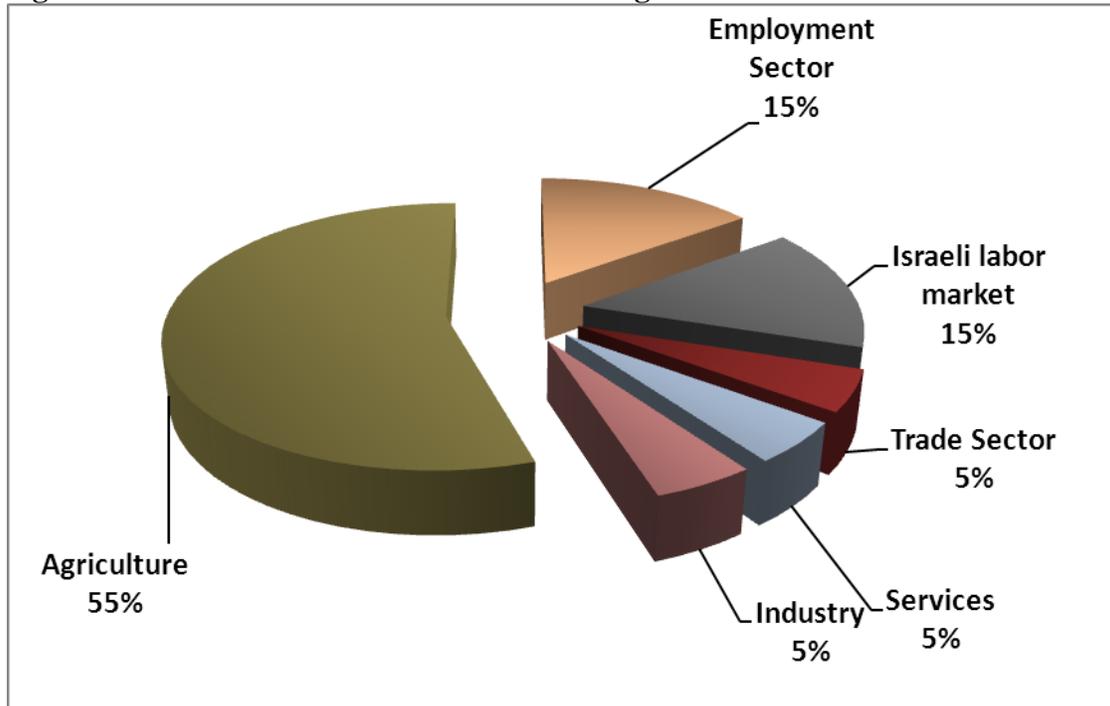
The economy in Marda is dependent mainly on the agricultural sector which absorbs 55% of the village's workforce (Marda Village Council, 2012) (See Figure 1).

The results of a field survey conducted by the ARIJ team in 2012 for the distribution of labor by economic activity in Marda are as follows:

- Agriculture sector (55%)

- Israeli labor market (15%)
- Government or other employees sector (15%)
- Services sector (5%)
- Trade sector (5%)
- Industry (5%)

**Figure 1: The distribution of labor force among main economic activities in Marda**



Source: Marda Village Council, 2012

Marda has 13 groceries, 2 fruits and vegetable stores, 6 service stores, 7 different professional workshops, 1 olive oil-press and 2 agricultural nurseries (Marda Village Council, 2012).

In 2012, the unemployment rate in Marda reached 75% and the groups most affected economically by the Israeli restrictions have been (Marda Village Council, 2012):

- Workers in the agriculture sector.
- Workers in the trade sector.
- Labor force workers.
- Workers in the services sector.

### Labor Force

According to the PCBS Population, Housing and Establishment Census-2007, 32.1% of Marda labor force was economically active, of whom 79.8% were employed, 67.8% were not economically active, 52.4% were students, and 32.5% were housekeepers (See Table 4).

**Table 4: Marda population (10 years of age and above) by sex and employment status**

Sex	Economically active				Non-economically active						Not stated	Total
	Employed	Currently Unemployed	Unemployed (never worked)	Total	Student	House-keeping	Unable to work	Not working & not looking for work	Others	Total		
M	324	62	18	<b>404</b>	246	0	46	4	19	<b>315</b>	0	<b>719</b>
F	48	5	9	<b>62</b>	270	320	66	3	11	<b>670</b>	1	<b>733</b>
<b>T</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>985</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1,452</b>

M: Male; F: Female; T: Total.

Source: PCBS, 2009.

## Agricultural Sector

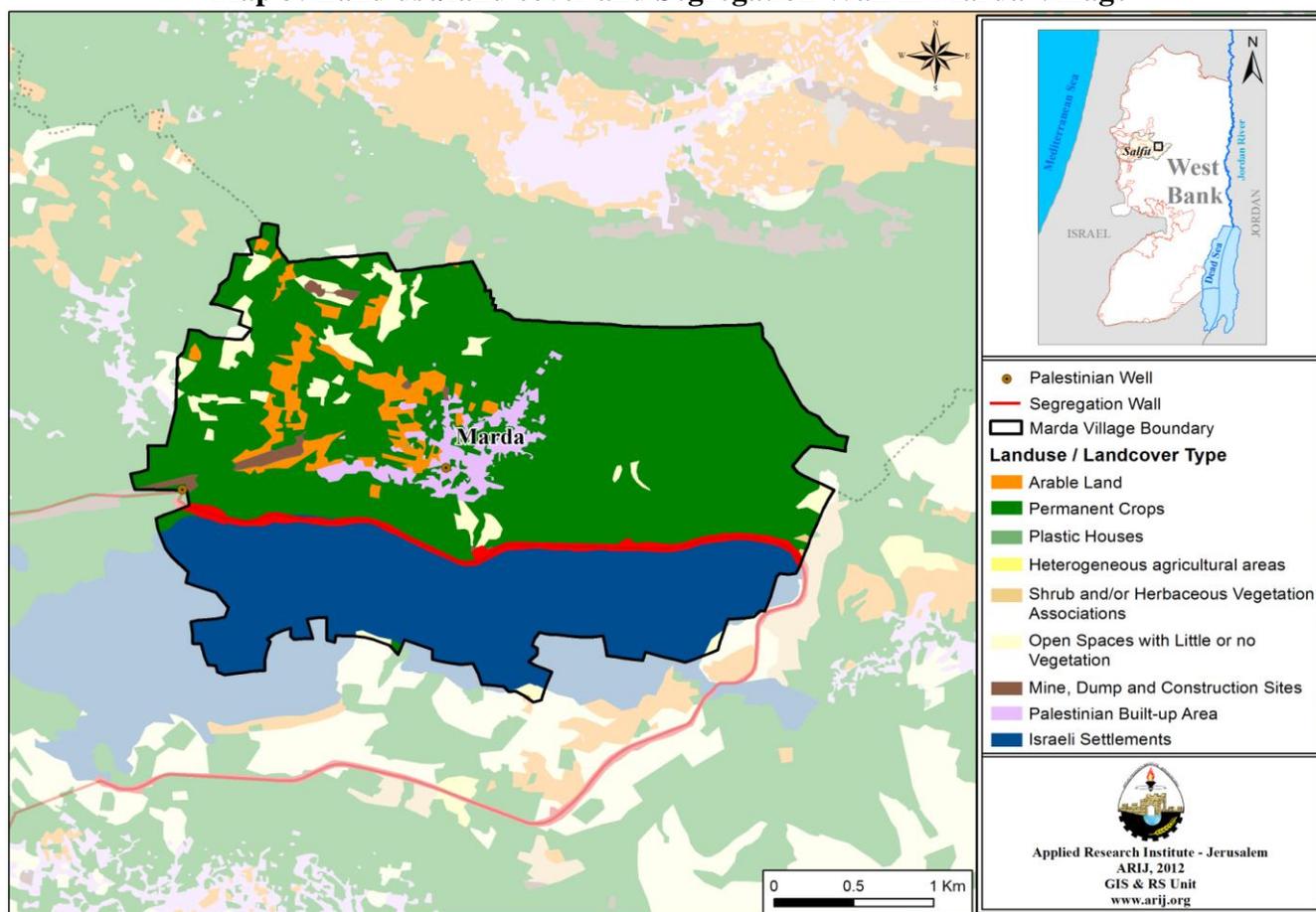
Marda has a total area of approximately 8,816 dunums of which 5,322 are 'arable' land and 279 dunums are registered as 'residential' (See Table 5 and Map 3).

**Table 5: Land use and land cover in Marda village (area in dunum)**

Total Area	Built up Area	Agricultural area (5,322)				Inland water	Forests	Open Spaces	Area of Industrial, Commercial & Transport Unit	Area of Settlements, Military Bases & Wall Zone
		Permanent Crops	Green-houses	Range-lands	Arable lands					
8,816	279	4,926	1	5	390	0	0	365	73	2,778

Source: ARJ – GIS Unit, 2012.

Map 3: Land use/land cover and Segregation Wall in Marda Village



Source: ARIJ - GIS Unit, 2013.

Table 6 shows the different types of rain-fed and irrigated open-cultivated vegetables in Marda. The most commonly cultivated crops within this area are tomatoes, jew’s melon and cauliflowers.

Table 6: Total area of rain-fed and irrigated open cultivated vegetables in Marda (area in dunums)

Fruity vegetables		Leafy vegetables		Green legumes		Bulbs		Other vegetables		Total Area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
12	17.5	0	11	0	1	0	2	0	0	12	31.5

Rf.: Rain-fed; Irr.: Irrigated.

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Salfit, 2010

Table 7 shows the different types of fruit trees planted in the area. Marda is famous for olive cultivation and there are approximately 3,440 dunums of land planted with olive trees in the village.

Table 7: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in Marda (area in dunums)

Olives		Citrus		Stone-fruits		Pome fruits		Nuts		Other fruits		Total Area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
3,440	0	0	0	80	0	2	0	0	0	85	0	3,607	0

Rf.: Rain-fed; Irr.: Irrigated.

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Salfit, 2010

In terms of field crops and forage in Marda, cereals (particularly wheat) are the most cultivated, covering an area of around 70 dunums (See Table 8).

**Table 8: Total area of horticulture and olive trees in Marda (area in dunums)**

Cereals		Bulbs		Dry legumes		Oil crops		Forage crops		Stimulating crops		Other crops		Total Area	
Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.	Rf.	Irr.
70	0	11	0	17	0	1	0	13	0	0	0	12	0	124	0

Rf.: Rain-fed; Irr.: Irrigated.

Source: Ministry of agriculture-Salfit, 2010

The difference between the two sets of results obtained from the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) and ARIJ's GIS Unit in sizes of agricultural areas is explained by the difference in each organization's definition of land coverage and ownership. The MoA and the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2011) conducted a survey which used a definition of agricultural areas based on land ownership. Therefore, the areas included in the survey were those of actual holdings of agricultural areas and not consider fragmented and small seasonal cultivated areas in residential and agricultural areas. ARIJ's survey, however, indicated the existence of a high proportion of small and fragmented holdings (home gardens) throughout the occupied Palestinian territories. This therefore accounts for the larger area of agricultural holdings calculated by ARIJ.

The field survey conducted by ARIJ team shows that just 1.5% of the residents in Marda rear and keeps domestic animals such as sheep and goats (See Table 9).

**Table 9: Livestock in Marda**

Cows*	Sheep	Camels	Poultry	Bee Hives
6	93	-	-	-

\*Including cows, bull calves, heifer calves and bulls

Source: Palestinian Ministry of Agriculture - Salfit, 2010

There are approximately 4 kilometers of agricultural roads in the village, divided as follows (Marda Village Council, 2012):

**Table 10: Agricultural Roads in Marda Village and their Lengths**

Suitability of Agricultural Roads	Length (km)
For vehicles	2
For tractors and agricultural machinery only	2
For animals only	-
Unsuitable	-

Source: Marda Village Council, 2012

The agricultural sector in the village faces some problems, including (Marda Village Council, 2012):

- The lack of a good market to sell agricultural products and the lack of economic feasibility in that which is being sold, mainly olive oil.
- The lack of financial and technical support and incentives provided to the livestock sector by governmental and civil institutions which have led to a reduction in dependency on this sector (including those working in it).

- Adopting primitive and ineffective techniques and methods in the both agricultural sectors; animal and plant production.
- The lack of access to agricultural lands isolated behind the Wall in addition to repeated Israeli harassments against owners, thus leading to land neglect.
- The location of water resources far in distance from farmers and landowners.
- The low and uncompetitive wages paid to agricultural laborers.

## Institutions and Services

Marda village has a post office division in addition to a number of local institutions and associations that provide services to various sectors of society. These include (Marda Village Council, 2012):

- **Marda Village Council:** Founded in 2005 by the Ministry of Local Government, with the aim of taking care of different issues concerning the village and providing various services to its population, in addition to infrastructure services.
- **Marda Youth Forum:** Founded in 2004 by the Ministry of Interior, with the goal of supporting young people in term of sports and providing them with different needed services, in addition to organizing sports and art teams, cultural seminars and awareness campaigns.
- **Marda Charitable Society:** Founded in 2007 by the Ministry of Interior, aiming to provide material, social and educational assistance support to the village residents.
- **Handhala Center:** Founded in 2005 by the Ministry of Interior. The Center is interested in youth aiming to provide them with cultural and scientific awareness through the organization of various activities, such as summer camps and assisting educational courses.
- **Marda Women Society:** Founded in 2008 by the Ministry of Interior. The Society sells family ration supplies at moderate prices through a private supermarket.
- **Marda Cooperative Society:** Founded in 2010 by the Ministry of Labor. The Society is interested in implementing ration projects joined among the different age groups in the village.

## Infrastructure and Natural Resources

### Electricity and Telecommunication Services:

Marda has been connected to a public electricity network since 1985. It is served by the 'Israeli Qatariya Electricity Company,' which is the main source of electricity in the village, and approximately 100% of the housing units in the village are connected to the network. The village residents face some problems concerning electricity, primarily the aged electrical network and its need for rehabilitation and maintenance, the power outages, the lack of a specialized staff to repair any damages in the electricity network and the high costs of electricity compared with neighboring localities (Marda Village Council, 2012).

Marda is also connected to a telecommunication network and approximately 90% of the housing units within the village boundaries are connected to phone lines (Marda Village Council, 2012).

### **Transportation Services:**

There are 2 taxis in addition to 10 illegal/unlicensed cars in Marda. However, residents suffer from the lack of vehicles in the village to serve them in addition to the sporadic closure of iron gates established on the villages entrances by the occupation forces. Nevertheless, due to the lack of transportation vehicles, the residents use Jamma'in or Salfit offices taxis (Marda Village Council, 2012). There are 2.5 km of main roads and 4 km of secondary roads in Marda, all of which are paved and in good condition (Marda Village Council, 2012).

### **Water Resources:**

Marda is provided with water by the 'West Bank Water Department' through the public water network established in 1994. All housing units are connected to the network (Marda Village Council, 2012)

The quantity of water supplied to Marda village in 2010 was recorded at approximately 75,600 cubic meters/year (Marda Village Council, 2012). Therefore, the estimated rate of water supply per capita is approximately 96 liters/day. However, no Marda citizen consumes this amount of water due to water losses, which are estimated at 22% (PWA, 2010). These losses happen at the main source, major transport lines, in the distribution network, and at the household level. Therefore, the rate of water consumption per capita in Marda is 75 liters per day (Marda Village Council, 2012). The average water consumption of Marda residents is low compared with the minimum quantity of 100 liters per capita per day proposed by the World Health Organization. Each cubic meter of water from the public network costs 4 NIS (Marda Village Council, 2012).

The village has 2 springs used for drinking and for domestic use (Marda Village Council, 2012). Moreover, a public water reservoir with a capacity of 250 cubic meters is located in the village in addition to 70 individual household rainwater harvesting cisterns (Marda Village Council, 2012).

### **Sanitation:**

Marda lacks a public sewerage network and most of the population use cesspits and septic tanks, as a main means for wastewater disposal (Marda Village Council, 2012).

Based on the estimated daily per capita water consumption, the approximated quantity of wastewater generated per day, is 129 cubic meters, or 47,174 cubic meters annually. At the individual level, it is estimated that the per capita wastewater generation is approximately 60 liters per day. The wastewater collected by cesspits and septic tanks is discharged by wastewater tankers directly to open areas or nearby valleys with little regard for the environment. Here it is noted that there is no wastewater treatment either at the source or at the disposal sites and this poses a serious threat to the environment in addition to public health (ARIJ - WERU, 2012).

### **Solid Waste Management:**

The Joint Services Council of East Salfit is responsible for the collection and disposal of solid waste generated by citizens and establishments in the village. As the process of solid waste management is costly, a monthly fee amounting to 15 NIS/ month per household is charged to the population and facilities served by domestic solid waste collection and transportation services. However, the collected fees are not considered sufficient for a good management of solid waste, with poor waste management exacerbated by the fact that only 90% of these fees are collected from the citizens (Marda Village Council, 2012)

Most of the population in Marda benefits from the solid waste services, whereby waste is collected from households, institutions, shops, and public squares in plastic bags, and placed in 45 containers (of 1m<sup>3</sup> capacity), located at various points in the village. The Joint Council collects the solid waste twice weekly and transports it using a waste vehicle to the village's dumping site, 500 m from the village, where it is subsequently burnt (Marda Village Council, 2012)

The daily per capita rate of solid waste production in Marda is 0.7kg. Thus the estimated amount of solid waste produced per day from the Marda residents is nearly 1.5 tons, or 552 tons per year (ARIJ-WERU, 2012).

## **Environmental Conditions**

Like other towns and villages in the Governorate, Marda experiences several environmental problems which must be addressed and solved. These problems can be identified as follows:

### **Water Crisis**

- Water is cut off by the West Bank Water Department for long periods of time during summer in several village neighborhoods, for numerous reasons:
  1. Israeli control over Palestinian water resources causes problems in the organization of water pumping and its distribution among populations. The West Bank Water Department distributes water to various areas on an interval basis because the quantity of water available is not sufficient to simultaneously supply everyone's needs. In addition, the West Bank Water Department purchases water from Israeli Companies in order to meet the citizens' water needs.
  2. High rate of water losses, due to the water networks- aged condition in need of rehabilitation and renovation.

### **Wastewater Management**

- The absence of a public sewage network in the village means that Marda residents are forced to use unhygienic cesspits for the disposal of wastewater, and/or to discharge wastewater into the streets. This is particularly common in winter, as citizens cannot afford the high cost of sewage tankers during this period. These methods facilitate environmental damage, health problems, and the spread of epidemics and diseases in the village. This wastewater also contaminates the groundwater because most cesspits are built without lining, to avoid the need to use sewage

tankers and allow wastewater to enter into the ground. Moreover, the untreated wastewater collected from cesspits by sewage tankers is disposed of in open areas without concern for the damage it causes to the environment and to residents' health.

### **Solid Waste Management:**

- Zahrat al Finjan landfill, in Jenin Governorate (approximately 32 km in distance from the center of Salfit Governorate), is considered the central sanitary landfill which is supposed to serve Salfit Governorate. However, the Municipalities and Village Councils in Salfit Governorate do not transfer the solid waste to Zahrat al Finjan landfill, but rather get rid of waste in random dumps scattered throughout the Governorate. This is due to the high costs of transporting and disposing waste in the landfill. As a result, wastes are being disposed randomly in these landfills causing an abomination to health, and leading to the proliferation of harmful flies, insects, and mice, as well as the bad odors, toxic gases and black smoke emitted when burned. All of this has harmful effects on human health in addition to the environment.
- The lack of a central sanitary landfill to serve Marda and other neighboring communities in the Governorate is due mainly to the obstacles created by the Israeli authorities for local and national institutions in granting licenses to establish such a landfill. The main impediment cited is that the appropriate land is within Area C and under Israeli administrative and security control. Additionally, the implementation of such projects depends on funding from donor countries. The lack of a sanitary landfill is a source of pollution to the groundwater and soil through the leachate produced from the solid waste, and produces bad odors and distortion of the landscape.

## **Impact of the Israeli Occupation**

### **Geopolitical status in Marda**

According to the Oslo II Interim Agreement signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel on 28<sup>th</sup> September 1995, Marda was divided into areas “B” and “C”. Approximately 1,398 dunums (15.8% of the village’s total area) were assigned as area B, where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has a complete control over civil matters but Israel continues to have overriding responsibility for security. Area B constitutes most of the inhabited Palestinian areas, including municipalities, villages and some refugee camps. It is worth noting that most of the village’s population resides in area B. The rest of the village’s area, constituting 7,418 dunums (84.2% of the total area), is classified as area C, where Israel retains full control over security and administration related to the territory (table 11). It is noted that Area C constitutes 60% of the entire West Bank (ARIJ- GIS, 2013). In area C Palestinian building and land management is prohibited unless through consent or authorization by the Israeli Civil Administration. Most of the lands lying within the area “C” are agricultural areas, open spaces and lands confiscated for Israeli settlements and isolated behind the Segregation Wall.

**Table 11: The Geopolitical Divisions of Marda – Salfit Governorate**

Area	Area in dunums	Percent of Total village area
Area A	0	0
Area B	1,398	15.8
Area C	7,418	84.2
Nature Reserve	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,816</b>	<b>100</b>

*Source: ARIJ-GIS, 2013*

## Israeli Occupation Practices in Marda Village

Marda village has been subjected to numerous Israeli confiscations for the benefit of the various Israeli objectives, represented in the construction of Israeli settlements, checkpoints, outposts and bypass roads on the village's territories. This is in addition to the 'Segregation Plan' represented by the Segregation Wall. That which follows is a breakdown of the Israeli confiscations to have negatively affected Marda village territories.

During their occupation of the Palestinian territories, Israeli Occupation Forces (IOF) confiscated 2,566 dunums (29%) in Marda to establish "Ariel" settlement south of the village and north of Salfit city. In terms of area, this is considered the second largest Israeli settlement in the West Bank, and is separated from Marda village by the Segregation Wall. The settlement was established in 1978 on a total area of 5,184 dunums of Marda lands in addition to Salfit city, Kifl Haris and Iskaka villages. Today, this settlement is inhabited by 17,559 Israeli settlers (ARIJ-GIS, 2012). In addition, the occupation authorities provided this settlement, built on confiscated Palestinian land, with a range of services and infrastructure, including in the sectors of health, education and entertainment to become an integrated city. Even more, they established the "Ariel College - Judea and Samaria." On 17 July 2012, the Council for Higher Education in Judea and Samaria passed a resolution to grant the institution full university status. This move was praised by the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Minister of Education Gideon Saar, Foreign Minister Avigdor Lieberman and some Knesset members. All 26 degree programs are now recognized by the Council of Higher Education in Israel.

Following the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada in September 2000, the Israeli occupation authorities established two Israeli military checkpoints on Marda's village eastern and western entrances. The checkpoints come in the form of Iron Gates and are both controlled by the Israeli Occupation Army. The two iron gates are end points to the only road (2.5 km long) that goes through the village from east to west and vice versa and connects it with the nearby Palestinian villages. The checkpoints are currently open but are sometimes subjected to closure by the Israeli occupation army, mainly in times of field tension. There is another checkpoint on the village's lands, represented as an earth mound which was established on an agricultural road linking Marda with Jamma'in village to the north to prevent farmers from accessing their agricultural lands north of the bypass road.

Moreover, following the outbreak of the Second Palestinian Intifada in September 2000, the Israeli occupation authorities established a military checkpoint on the northern entrance of Salfit city, which is represented as an iron gate established near the western entrance of Ariel settlement. Closing

the northern entrance of Salfit city has had a negative impact on Palestinians lives during the last decade, as it is restricting their freedom of movement and connection with villages north of Salfit and the rest of the West Bank. This has caused numerous material losses for Palestinians and increased economic burden, as they are forced to use longer distances in order to reach villages in the north.

The closure of this checkpoint, was carried out so under the pretext of protecting settlers in Ariel settlement as well as other nearby settlements. This checkpoint represents a part of the Segregation Plan adopted by the occupation forces through the establishment of settlements, annexing them through the Segregation Wall into the Western Segregation Area and changing Palestinians' movement, through the establishment of military checkpoints on roads. The checkpoint north of Salfit was closed to Palestinians for more than 10 years and was recently partially opened (during 2011) for public vehicles only (taxis and buses), while private cars are still forbidden to cross it. Due to the closure of this main entrance to Salfit city and its neighboring villages, Palestinians (in general) started using the eastern entrance of Salfit city in order to be able to access villages in the northeast, north and northwest of Salfit city such as Iskaka, Yasuf, Marda, Jamma'in, Qira, Kifl Haris and nearby villages and vice versa. Additionally, Palestinians who want to access the northern West Bank Governorates such as Nablus and Jenin (and vice versa), are also forced to cross another military checkpoint named "Za'tara" (Kfar Taffuh) which separates the center of the West Bank from its north. This checkpoint is considered a main feature of Palestinians daily suffering.

Moreover, the Israeli Government confiscated thousands of agricultural and non-agricultural dunums to open several bypass roads that stretch thousands of kilometers from the north to south of the West Bank. This was carried out in order to link Israeli settlements, dismember Palestinian lands and enhance security control over it. Israel has additionally confiscated lands from Marda's north, for the construction of Israeli bypass road no. 505, which extends for 2.6 km with a 15 m width on the village's land. The real threat of the bypass roads however lies in the buffer zone formed by the IOF along these roads extending approximately 75 m on each side. These buffer zones dramatically increase the total area of land affected by the construction of the bypass roads.

### **The Israeli Segregation Wall Plan in Marda Village**

The Israeli Segregation Wall plan has had a negative and destructive impact on Marda residents. The latest route of the Israeli Segregation Wall Plan, published on the Israeli Ministry of Defense's website in 2007, shows that the existing Wall on Marda southern village lands, confiscates and isolates 2,721 dunums (31%) of the village's total area and isolates even more lands for Israeli settlement activities. The majority of lands isolated by the Wall mainly includes "Ariel" Israeli settlement in addition to a small part of agricultural areas and open spaces (See Table 12).

**Table 12: Land Classification of the Isolated lands in Marda Village – Salfit Governorate**

No.	Land Classification	Area (in dunums)
1	Israeli Settlements	2,566
2	Open Spaces	30
3	Agricultural Areas	20
4	Wall Zone	105
<b>Total</b>		<b>2,721</b>
<b>Source:</b> The Geo-informatics Department – ARIJ 2013		

In accordance with the latest Segregation Wall plan, the Segregation Wall will isolate one third of Marda village's land and will include many Israeli settlements inside the Western Segregation Zone within the "Ariel Finger"<sup>1</sup> scheme; of which the largest and most important settlement in terms of area, type and location, is Ariel settlement. This will lead to the isolation of Marda village from Salfit city and from Salfit southern and western villages, as this plan aims to dismember Palestinian land, restricting the movement of the Palestinian population and confiscating and isolating more agricultural lands for Israeli settlement purposes.

It should also be noted that villages of Salfit Governorate are known for their fertile soil, their beautiful nature and the abundance of water and large trees, especially olive trees. This makes the region an important target for Israeli settlement activities, in addition to being the second Governorate after Jerusalem in terms of land confiscation, wall and settlement construction (ARIJ-UMD, 2012).

### **Military Orders Issued in Marda Village**

- Israeli Military Order No. 32/05/T- issued on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 2005, to confiscate a total area of 197 dunums of land in Marda and Kifl Haris villages in order to construct the Israeli Segregation Wall. In addition, on December 29<sup>th</sup> 2011, the 'Israeli Civil Office of Coordination and Liaison,' handed Palestinians' of Marda military notification No. 32/05/T (extension and amendment No. 2) which extends the confiscation validity of the aforementioned order (No. 32/05/T) until the year 2014 to complete the construction of the fence (a form of the Racial Segregation Wall) on 86.2 dunums of land of Marda and Kifl Haris villages. The order was first issued back in the year 2005 and states the confiscation of 197 dunums of Marda and Kifl Haris lands for the construction of the fence around the settlement of Ariel. The military notification, which was signed by the commander of the Israeli army in the West Bank; Moshe Lobinski, is a renewal for a second time for lands that have already been confiscated by the Israeli occupation authorities in 2005 for the construction of the wall. The military notification was first amended on February 11 2010.

<sup>1</sup> The 'Ariel finger' penetrates deep inside the northern part of the West Bank, on lands of Salfit Governorate, about 22 km east of the 1949 Armistice Line (Green Line), (ARIJ GIS, 2012). The Israeli updated Wall map of April, 2007 which was published on the [Israeli Ministry of Defense website](#) showed that the Wall around Ariel bloc will annex 21 Israeli settlements to Israel proper, at the same time, it will isolate more than 10 Palestinian communities from the center of life in Salfit city and the nearby Palestinian villages.

It should be noted that the notifications of seizure of land that had been previously confiscated by the occupation, came because the occupation authorities did not complete the construction of a section of the wall (fence) at the planned site as stated in the Military Order. This was due to petitions submitted by Palestinians to the Israeli Supreme Court against the construction of the wall (fence) in the area, questioning the legitimacy of its location, which upon its implementation will deprive Palestinians from their agricultural lands. This in turn prompted the Israeli government to issue an extension of validity to the Israeli military order; the first was issued in the year 2010 while the second was issued in 2011, so that Israel can complete the construction of the wall (the fence) around the “Ariel Finger”.

- Israeli Military Order No. 33/05/T (extension of validity No. 3): Issued on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2011, to confiscate a total area of 34 dunums of lands in Marda and Iskaka villages in order to continue the construction of the Israeli Segregation Wall.

### **Israeli Demolition Policy Targeting Marda Village**

On June 17 2010, the Construction and organization Committee of the Israeli Civil Administration notified Marda village of an order to stop the construction works at one of the village’s main roads, which was built and paved during February 2010. The road is 300 m long and serves Marda village residents in addition to serving large areas of the rest of the northern territory of the village. Israeli occupation forces however encircled Marda with a segregation fence that separates the village and the Israeli bypass road No. 505, which passes through Marda village lands from the northern side. The road which supports the infrastructure in the village was carried out by the local council, funded by the Palestinian Ministry of Finance and cost 200,000 US dollars. According to the notification, the village council is committed to destroy what has been built of the road, otherwise the Israeli bulldozers will handle the process of scraping the road. Note that this is the second time the road construction receives a halt of construction notification, with the first time in March 2010. The road is still standing until today’s date but a petition at the Israeli court is still pending.

## Development Plans and Projects

### Implemented Projects

Marda Village Council has implemented several development projects in Marda during the past five years (See Table 13).

**Table 13: Implemented Development Plans and Projects in Marda during the Last Five Years**

Name of the Project	Type	Year	Donor
Constructing a public hall	Public Services	2008	Belgium
Maintaining and rehabilitating the water reservoir	Infrastructure	2008	ANERA
Expanding the village's schools	Educational	2009	World Vision
Establishing pumpers at the village's spring	Water	2011	World Vision
Establishing and adapting the village structural plan	Infrastructure	2011	Ministry of Local Government
Organizing, maintaining and expanding the secondary roads	Infrastructure	2008 & 2011	Ministry of Finance
Expanding and rehabilitating the village entrances	Infrastructure	2008 & 2011	CHF & Ministry of Local Government
Supplying the schools with computers	Educational	2009 & 2011	World Vision

Source: Marda Village Council, 2012

### Proposed Projects

Marda Village Council, in cooperation with the civil society organizations in the village and the village residents, hopes to implement several projects in the coming years. The project ideas were developed during the Participatory Rapid Appraisal workshop conducted by ARIJ staff in the village. The projects are as follows, in order of priority from the viewpoints of the participants' in the workshop:

1. Creating a waste separation and humus (compost) industry project.
2. Reclaiming (100 dunums) and rehabilitating (1000 dunums) agricultural lands, in addition to establishing agricultural water harvesting cisterns (50 wells).
3. Restoring and rehabilitating the old city buildings.
4. Extracting Bio Gas from cesspits and livestock waste.
5. Constructing (6 km) and rehabilitating (6 km) agricultural roads.
6. Constructing a sports gym and a football stadium.

## Locality Development Priorities and Needs

Marda suffers from a significant shortage of infrastructure and services. Table 14 shows the development priorities and needs in the village, according to the Village Council's point of view.

**Table 14: Development Priorities and Needs in Marda**

No.	Sector	Strongly Needed	Needed	Not a Priority	Notes
<b>Infrastructural Needs</b>					
1	Opening and pavement of roads	*			21 km <sup>^</sup>
2	Rehabilitation of old water networks	*			8 km
3	Extending the water network to cover new built up areas	*			2 km
4	Construction of new water networks	*			2 km
5	Rehabilitation/ construction of new wells or springs	*			2 springs
6	Construction of water reservoirs			*	
7	Construction of a sewage disposal network	*			10 km
8	Construction of a new electricity network		*		8 km
9	Providing containers for solid waste collection		*		20 containers
10	Providing vehicles for collecting solid waste	*			1
11	Providing a sanitary landfill	*			
<b>Health Needs</b>					
1	Building new clinics or health care centres			*	
2	Rehabilitation of old clinics or health care centres			*	
3	Purchasing medical equipment and tools			*	
<b>Educational Needs</b>					
1	Building new schools		*		expanding the village's schools
2	Rehabilitation of old schools		*		the elementary school
3	Purchasing new school equipment	*			all schools
<b>Agriculture Needs</b>					
1	Rehabilitation of agricultural lands	*			100 dunums
2	Building rainwater harvesting cisterns	*			50 cisterns
3	Construction of livestock barracks	*			20 barracks
4	Provision of Veterinary Services	*			
5	Provision of seeds and hay for animals	*			50 tons per year
6	Construction of new greenhouses	*			20 greenhouses
7	Rehabilitation of greenhouses	*			1 greenhouse
8	Provision of field crops seeds	*			
9	Provision of plants and agricultural supplies	*			

<sup>^</sup> 10 km main roads, 6 km secondary roads and 5 km are agricultural roads

Source: Marda Village Council, 2012

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