

For the purpose of this report we have divided the Bethlehem governorate into three areas: centre-urban, western and eastern.

Western Area:

The fertile Western Bethlehem area is the governorate's traditional breadbasket. In recent decades, settlement construction and expansion has reduced the agricultural space available for Bethlehem farmers. Planned Barrier construction threatens to sever this agricultural hinterland from the urban core to the east.

Centre-Urban Area:

The centre-urban area comprises Bethlehem city, Beit Sahur, Beit Jala, and adjacent refugee camps, municipalities and villages, which form a continuous urban fabric. It also includes the southern villages and Beit Fajar, which are separated from each other and from the urban area in the north by large tracts of Israeli-administered Area C.

Eastern Area:

The eastern governorate comprises an extensive area of desert and semi-desert and the Dead Sea. This area is effectively off-limits to Palestinians, because of Israeli-administered Area C, nature reserves and military areas. According to the World Bank, a Palestinian Dead Sea hotel industry "of comparable profitability to Israel, this would provide annual revenues of some USD 290 million while "the potential incremental value from ...potash, bromine and magnesium has been conservatively estimated at USD 918 million per annum."

