

Dutch-Palestinian Cooperation Forum

“Smart Opportunities for Cooperation”

1. Seminar in The Hague (Bel Air Hotel, 29 October 2015)

On 29 October, Dutch Prime Minister Rutte and Palestinian Prime Minister Hamdallah will open the second edition of the Dutch-Palestinian Bilateral Cooperation Forum, which aims to deepen and broaden the relations between the Netherlands and the Palestinian Territories.

A delegation of around 100 Palestinian representatives of businesses, knowledge institution and government bodies (including 10 mayors) and led by President Abbas, will take part in the event. The forum provides an excellent opportunity to establish contacts with potential partners. Participants for other countries are welcome to attend. The first Bilateral Forum took place in Bethlehem from 6-8 December 2013:

www.gpic.nl/missionsPalestine.pdf



Opening of the first Bilateral Forum in 2013

General program of the Forum

In the morning, from 09:00 hours, you will be able to get a good picture of the opportunities that the Palestinian market has to offer in the area of private sector development, including a presentation on the financial instruments that the Dutch government has to offer for doing business with the Palestinian Territories. Within the overarching theme of innovation ('smart opportunities'), there are several business and knowledge seminars related to the following sectors:

Agro & Food

Modernization of agriculture is an important theme in the Palestinian Territories. Part of the participants is interested in how technology can help Palestinian agricultural producers to increase their production. In addition, food producers interested in export possibilities to the Netherlands and other European countries will participate.

Energy

Palestinian companies are committed to renewable energy. These companies are interested in knowledge and experience in renewable energy, solar energy especially.

Water

Water scarcity is a major problem in the Palestinian Territories. Led by PADUCO (Palestinian-Dutch Academic Cooperation Program on Water), participants will discuss scientific cooperation between the Palestinian Territories and the Netherlands to face future challenges in the water sector together. Several papers will be presented.

ICT

The Palestinian Territories are an upcoming destination for offshore outsourcing with interesting connections to the Arab region. This offers opportunities for European companies that are looking for highly skilled ICT workers at lower costs. The program of the ICT-seminar can be found below.

In addition to participating in the sector seminars, you will have the chance to meet Palestinian companies one-on-one in a matchmaking session. After the official closing by the ministers of Foreign Affairs, Koenders and Malki, there will be a networking dinner, opened by President Abbas and the minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Ploumen. During this networking dinner you will have the opportunity to meet existing partners and gain new contacts from around 100 Palestinian businessmen and representatives of knowledge and government institutions.

08.30-09.00	Registration
09.00-09.30	Welcome – morning opening
09.30-10.00	Private Sector Development Instruments – possibilities for Dutch and Palestinian companies
10.00-10.45	Trade with and investments in the Palestinian territories; outcomes of a market study and the practice of Private Sector Development Instruments
11.00-12.30	Q&A Private Sector Development Instruments Sector sessions: AGRO FOOD <i>Towards a more competitive Palestinian economy: innovation and business development in the agricultural sector</i> WATER <i>PADUCO Results and Reflections from the First Phase (2013-2015)</i> CROSS-OVER <i>workshop on ICT & Water, Agro</i>
12.30-13.30	Lunch
13.30-15.00	Sector sessions: AGRO FOOD <i>University-agroindustry linkages for innovation, business, development and employability</i> ENERGY <i>Renewable energy</i> WATER <i>Furthering the cooperation between Palestinian and Dutch water sectors</i>
15.00-15.30	Official opening of the Forum by Dutch Prime Minister Rutte and Palestinian Prime Minister Hamdallah. Various (sector) sessions:
15.30-16.30	Informal Round Table Meeting <i>on invitation only</i>
15.30-16.30	AGRO FOOD <i>Investing in Palestinian agriculture</i>
15.30-18.00	ICT <i>Palestinian ICT-opportunities. Palestine as a nearshore outsourcing destination and gateway to the Gulf markets</i>
16.30-18.00	Matchmaking (also possible throughout the day – depending on matches)
16.30-17.30	Doing Business in the Netherlands
17.00-18.00	Trade with and investments in the Palestinian territories; outcomes of a market study and the practice of Private Sector Development Instruments
18.00-18.30	Official closing including by Ministers of Foreign Affairs Koenders and Malki. Signing of Documents
18.30	Opening buffet dinner by Minister Ploumen (Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation) and President Abbas. Also networking event (for all sectors combined).

ICT-related events during the Bilateral Forum

11:00-12:30	ICT-workshop on options for collaboration on the use of ICT and remote sensing in the Palestinian water and agro sector.
15:00	Official opening of the Forum by Dutch Prime Minister Rutte and Palestinian Prime Minister Hamdallah.
15:30-18:00	Seminar: ‘Palestinian ICT-opportunities’ . Main topics:

- The Palestinian Territories as an upcoming nearshore outsourcing destination. Well-known users of Palestinian ICT-services are Alcatel-Lucent, Volvo, HP, Intel and Cisco. Highly skilled engineers are available, while the Palestinian tariffs are lower than the prevailing Western European.
- How to conduct offshore ICT projects successfully? Several Dutch organizations are outsourcing to both Westbank and Gaza. A case study on how to work with foreign suppliers will be presented (e.g. on using agile methodologies).
- Saudi-Arabia and the Emirates: interesting export markets for European software developers. Compared with other nations, the Palestinian Territories has a specific advantage: the companies can also be used for localisation: adapting European software for Arabic-speaking markets.
- Subsidies. In order to stimulate foreign trade, a new fund has been created: the Dutch Good Growth Fund, with 700 million Euro. Especially for small and medium sized enterprises, for market research, training, pilots and investments.
- Informal networking with members of the Palestinian ICT delegation. For the profiles of the eight companies, see: www.gpic.nl/Palestine-ICT.pdf

Interested in taking part?

Attending the Bilateral Forum is free of charge, but registration is required. The event will take place in the Bel Air Hotel in The Hague: www.worldhotelbelair.com. This hotel is located between the major airports in the Netherlands: Amsterdam Schiphol Airport and Rotterdam/The Hague Airport. Travel time from both airports is about 45 minutes. The location can easily be reached by taxi, public transport or car. To register for the ICT-seminar during the Forum, use the link: <http://bit.ly/1NI48Ft>



2. Public events in Germany (Stuttgart, 26 & 27 October)

Monday, 26 October, Stuttgart

15:00 - 18:00 Round-table event especially for German intermediates / consultants: short presentations by Palestinian companies; individual meetings to discuss collaboration.

Tuesday, 27 October, Stuttgart

09:00 - 15:00 Interactive seminar for potential German clients other interested persons (e.g. ICT clusters, associations). Matchmaking to take place afterwards.

Note: details of events and the location will be made available separately.

Individual meetings with Palestinian ICT-companies are possible

A number of Palestinian ICT-companies will attend the Forum and seminar. They offer a broad range of services, such as software programming, testing, system conversion and migration, smartphone development, e-commerce and localization into Arabic.

Contact us in case you want individual meetings with them on 26/27 October (Stuttgart) or 29/30 October (The Hague) . The Palestinian ICT-delegation will consist of:

ASAL Technologies:
<http://www.asaltech.com>



Exalt:
www.exalt-tech.com



Unit One:
<http://www.unitone.ps>



Ultimit Advanced Turnkey Solutions:
<http://www.ultimitats.com>



iConnect:
<http://www.iconnecths.com>



Israa' Software:
<http://www.iscosoft.com>



Altariq:
<http://www.altariq.ps>



Trusted Systems:
<http://www.ts.com.ps>



ICT outsourcing to the Palestinian Territories

For more than 20 years, companies in Europe have been conducting ICT-work in various offshore destinations, such as India or Eastern Europe. There are two main reasons for offshore sourcing: the possibility to reduce costs and the availability of specialized ICT-skills abroad.

Over the last decade, the Palestinian ICT-sector has shown continuous growth in products and services. 13 universities have ICT-faculties, with 2500 yearly graduates. There are more than 300 ICT-related companies, both in the West Bank as in Gaza, with a total of around 5000 employees. A quarter of the employees have an academic background and 15% has at least ten years of experience in software-engineering.



The Palestinian Territories can be considered an upcoming *nearshore* outsourcing destination, since it is only 4 hours by plane and there is hardly any time difference. American and European organizations are already using Palestinian ICT-services. A specific advantage of Palestine is the loyalty within companies, resulting in a low turnover of staff. This loyalty makes outsourcing easier, and the local firms can be considered interesting partners, also for small and medium sized European clients.



For additional information on the Palestinian ICT sector, please check the website of PITA (Palestinian Information Technology Association of Companies): www.pita.ps. PITA represents more than 150 major ICT companies in Palestine's emerging technology and startup ecosystem. It organizes on an annual basis the Expotech ICT exhibition and conference, both in Westbank and Gaza (www.expotech.ps).

Using Palestine as a gateway to the Middle-East and Gulf

The Middle-East and Gulf offers great business opportunities in the field of ICT, as the region is expected to invest hundreds of billions in ICT projects during the next five years. According to research firm Forrester, most opportunities will come from the Gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE (United Arab Emirates). They invest heavily in eGovernment, healthcare, smart cities and increased infrastructure. The ICT sector has also been boosted by industrial investments in the region, aim to be a global business hub.

For many European software companies, the countries around the Gulf are rather unknown, but can be promising export markets for software packages or ICT services. Some of the companies from Palestine can assist with localisation (adapting the software into the specific demands of the Gulf-market, translating the software into the Arabic language), or might be able to offer support in linking to those markets.

Corporate Social Responsibility



Several foreign relationships with the Palestinian Territories started because of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiatives. After a visit of CEO John Chambers, Cisco decided in 2009 to invest 10 million USD in the ICT-cooperation with Palestine. Other American firms would follow this example. A YouTube video gives an impression: www.youtube.com/watch?v=foQQdksPv9M. *"It started with hesitation and doubt, but became a good business investment"*. Zika Abzuk, manager, Cisco

See also the article: 'Palestine and ICT Offshore Sourcing: from CSR to Long-term Economic Impact': www.gpic.nl/outsourcing-palestine-csr.pdf

Organiser of the ICT-events

CBI (Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries) is part of RVO (Rijksdienst voor Ondernemend Nederland) and works for the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It contributes to sustainable economic development in developing countries through the expansion of exports. A number of highly qualified, reliable and capable ICT service providers in Palestine have been selected. The project also offers assistance to European companies (free of charge) in order to explore outsourcing opportunities in Palestine. For information about CBI: www.cbi.eu.



CBI
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

For information



For information: Mr. Paul Tjia, GPI Consultancy
P.O. Box 26151, 3002 ED Rotterdam, the Netherlands
Tel.: +31-10-4254172, E-mail: paul@gpic.nl, Web: www.gpic.nl