

Message from Chairman:

New Year, New initiatives; The best is yet to come

Dear all; Members of The Palestinian Information Technology Association of Companies- (PITA) and all the affiliated companies working in the ICT Sector.

We can only send you our sincere gratitude as we beginning 2020. May Allah bless Palestine and all of you who have built this country and helped it flourish.

PITA is persisting its endeavors for the new year. We; the Board of Directors and the executive team are aiming to empower PITA and its role on the local and the international forums. Our main concern is to rebuild and enhance the cohesion and the trust among PITA's members; we seek to include and gather all the influential companies working in this sector and so PITA can turn into vital, absorbing and leading force that incubate and foster a proactive environment for supporting the companies operating in this sector. We will also continue working on the strategic objectives to rise with this sector and strengthen its companies in order to expand and promote its role in all the economic sectors locally and internationally. Hence; we call upon all our members and partners to be hand in hand and participate in the activities PITA is planning to achieve.

To abridge PITA's 2019 activities; here are some of the most important accomplishments PITA has done;

- Rebuilding the relationship and the cooperation with the government and the official bodies, giving PITA's members more space to participate in different committees and reallocating the roles in which will guarantee achieving the public and the private interest.
- Widening the horizons for members and start-ups to participate.
- Achieving a deep harmony and cooperation in Expotech this year between all sectors in the field of FinTech and Blockchain, and emphasizing the real value of such event on all levels.
- Building up on Expotech's recommendations regarding developing the government and banking transactions in FinTech sector, the Agricultural sector and other economic sectors through launching a series of programs, workshops and committees.
- Launching PITAtimes Newsletter. This bulletin in its eight copies has highlighted the role of this sector, its success stories and achievements.
- Conducting different meetings and discussions with several donors to rebuild the trust with them and to solve the relations that were marred by different problems.
- Signing new projects and programs with donors and International Organizations.

PITA looks forward to reactivate its role on the wider level this year. Thus; we invite all our members to suggest the important activities that can help this sector, we also seek to carry out several activities for 2020 that will serve the affiliated companies under PITA's umbrella; such as the following:

- Planning for trade missions to Moscow and Dubai, and trying the best so Palestine can participate in international events such as GITEK and other related- ICT events.
- Bridging the ICT gap between the learning process and labor market requirements through providing workshops in different Palestinian universities.
- Promoting for the sector locally and internationally by expanding and fastening its working pace to include all the governorates, targeting different economic sectors and focusing on reaching out to the international forums and so helping Palestine to be in the forefront.
- Planning for Palestine Technology Week – Expotech 2020, under the theme “AI: When Digital Becomes Human”.
- Holding an exhibition for all sectors in field of Information Technology in Hebron City.
- Representing the members on all the official committees and all activities and demands that will help in advancing the ICT sector.

In a nutshell; PITA's endeavors that have been culminated through 20 years were built on the members' pioneering role, congruence, unity and dedication in keeping this sector as a driving force in developing the Palestinian National Economy.



Forward by Dr. Rashid Al-Jayousi, Assistant Professor - Department of Computer Science & IT, Al-Quds University

Bridging the gap between the Education Sector and the Palestinian Industry

There has been much discussion about the gap between academia and the private sector over the past few years. Many companies state that they find it difficult, to a certain degree, to find suitable graduates with the required skills to fill vacancies with indication that this problem is growing over the years. Such problem could force some companies to hire employees who do not have the skills needed for the job and conduct some kind of training for them, which could cost the company time and money. On the other hand educational institutes stress the fact that their programs are designed according to international standards and provide enrolled students with the necessary knowledge and skills needed for the labor market. They also stress that the employer should conduct the training needed by the company, as soon as the student starts the job, they claim that it is difficult to follow the rapidly changing technologies and tools needed by the private sector.

Over the past years, many research studies had been conducted as well as workshops and conferences that were dedicated to analyze this gap and come up with recommendation and models to bridge such gap. In the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2017-2022 (MOEHE 2018) it is stated that one of the key challenges facing the higher education sector is the failure to link outputs of higher education and needs of the labor market due to the growing number of registered students in different programs without considering the needs of the labor market, the existence of the parallel education, and community's low appreciation for technical and vocational education. Some actions were proposed to mitigate effects of this issue such as conducting needs- assessment studies and surveys about labor market needs, to conduct awareness campaigns on technical and vocational specializations, and to integrate some vocational courses with the undergraduate courses.

In the final technical report of Expotech Technology Week 2018, it is stated that one of the obstacle that significantly hinder the expansion and growth of the information and communication technology the gap between the skills that ICT students receive at schools and universities and the labor market needs and requirements. In 2015 Arab World for Research and Development (AWRAD) worked with CARE International (CARE) on a comprehensive assessment of skills gaps.

Bridging the gap between the Education Sector and the Palestinian Industry

The research indicated the challenges to be addressed, foundations to be built upon and paths to be taken in pursuit of a more skilled, entrepreneurial and competitive labor market. The research stresses that skills gaps are a pressing problem in contemporary Palestine as identified by all stakeholders. The research stresses the fact that greater communication and guidance must be promoted and provided to shrink this gap. The research claims that employers and educational institutions do agree that the greatest impediment to limited employability is the absence of practical skills among applicants.

Different models were designed as a solution to bridge this gap, one model is the dual studies program adopted by Al-Quds University with funding from the German Government through GIZ. Dual studies is an educational system that combines the theoretical study with the practical application, it depends on the integration of academic study and linking students in the work environment since the first day of enrolling to the university. Dual Studies aims to bridge the gap between the academic educational outcomes and the market needs. It gives the students the opportunity to practice their future profession in one of the specialized Palestinian companies throughout the bachelor years.

Several information technology center of excellence (ITCE) were established such as Intel ITCE, Islamic University of Gaza. Najjad Zeenni ITCE, Birzeit University. Hassib Sabbagh ITCE, Arab American University, Said Khoury ITCE, Al-Quds University, Korean Palestinian ITCE, An-Najah National University, Friends of Fawzi Kawash ITCE, Palestine Polytechnic University. The original ideas behind the centers were to create high-tech center to serve the community, and bridge the gap between the Academia and the local community nearby.

Several incubators in Palestine were established in order to facilitate and support young Palestinian entrepreneurs with training, and initial funding to setting-up and manage their own business. One such incubator is the Palestine's Information and Communications Technology Incubator (PICTI), is the first Non-Profit ICT incubator in Palestine, which was founded in 2004.

Another business incubator and entrepreneurial academy that is recently established is Al-Quds Center for Innovation Technology and Entrepreneurship (B-CITE) that aims to provide support and guidance to the entrepreneurs of Jerusalem community, particularly to Al-Quds University graduates. The Palestine Techno Park (PTP) at Berzeit is also established end of 2016 to help startups grow and commercialize

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In my opinion the problem with the previously mentioned initiative and other similar ones is that they work in isolation. It is becoming necessary that no single stakeholder (Policy makers, Educational institutes, Private sector) alone can lead the way towards closing the skills gap. All parties must be able to assume a very active and productive role, and they need to interact in constructive ways. By identifying and examining ways in which government, private sector and university can act in unison and engage in complex interwoven processes of mutual adaptation and change, and thereby create important synergies and new capacities in Palestine. It is important that all stakeholders work together intensively on a plan to bridge the gap between the private sector and the academia through creating joint training programs, on campus and off campus, that will acquire graduates with the needed skills while studying. This requires more participation and involvement of the private sector in the development and implementation of the curriculum. It is important to strengthen our universities ties with industry and I hope we can see more presence of the private sectors on campuses with more interactions.

Networking Event “Technology change-makers and corporates’ developers”

The Palestinian Information Technology Association of Companies – PITA in partnership with Hebron Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Hebron have held Networking Event entitled “Technology change-makers and corporate developers”. The event was under the patronage and presence of His Excellency Dr. Ishaq Sider - The Minister of Telecom. And Information Technology, and the presence of other stakeholders and companies working in this sector from all over the country.

Mr. Abdu Idrees – the head of the chamber of commerce - has opened the workshop; in a nutshell; he stressed on the importance of keeping up with the ICT international development, exchanging the local and international experiences in this field worldwide. He highlighted the strategies of the board of directors in achieving economic development in cooperation with several partners and governmental bodies and the private sector; hoping that this workshop will benefit all the participants and they will eventually be able to come out with practical outputs and advantages.

Mr. Saeed Zeidan- the Chairman of the Palestinian Information Technology Association of Companies – PITA, welcomed everyone and pointed to the effort, the dedication and the commitment that the Chamber of Commerce and Hebron Expo have showed to hold this workshop; emphasizing that this is the first time for ICT companies move together across the country hand by hand for the purposes of presenting their services and consultations and exchanging their experiences and knowledge. Mr. Saeed discussed the necessity of using advanced technology in Palestine at a wider level and he announced holding the next exhibition in field of Information Technology in Hebron.

Hence; His Excellency, Dr.Ishaq Sider affirmed that the Ministry is seeking to build and establish bridges of communication and cooperation among all the economic, industrial and ICT sectors; explaining that this needs working on supporting and encouraging the bonds of this strategic partnership under the major developments and trends the world is currently witnessing in the ICT sector by which they affect life on several aspects. Therefore, all the Palestinian sectors have to keep abreast of the constant and successive changes in this field, and reach their optimum level in meeting the customers’ demands and needs with the required efficiency and effectiveness and achieving the desired digital transformation.

The workshop included presentations by the participating companies on their most prominent achievements, experiences and what have they achieved regarding the ICT sector. Not to mention a Memorandum of Agreement was signed between the Palestinian Information Technology Association of Companies – PITA represented by its Chairman; Mr. Saeed Zeidan and between Hebron Expo represented by its chairman; Mr. Rami Al-Natsheh. For more information you can visit following websites; [SAWA News](#) and [Hebron Radio](#).



Minutes of Meeting

Evaluating PITA's 2019 activities and setting 2020's vision and work plan

The meeting included different parties from several sectors; Programming and Internet Service Providers' companies. The goal of the meeting was highlighting PITA's main strategic outcomes of 2019 and suggesting the new activities for 2020 and setting the best work plan that guarantee achieving those outcomes. They pointed to how such activities are part of PITA's strategic goals in which they have to be enhanced and reactivated to help and serve all members on all levels and this needs PITA's efforts for promoting this sector on the local and the international level.

The findings and the recommendations of the meeting were the following:

1. Accentuating and empowering the role of PITA locally and internationally and in turn it will be able to defend and protect the members' rights and interests regarding the governmental aspect.
2. Taking a greater role in the coordinating council.
3. Reinforcing its role to have a strong voice for any future demands with the government.
4. Continuing organizing the internal structure of PITA in terms of developing its internal governance, working in a transparency manner with all members, updating the internal system to give a precise clarification of the members' roles that will assure advancing the role of PITA and its members and finally setting a clear policy regarding the conflict of interest issue.
5. Setting an annual agenda for its activities.
6. Widening its members' base.
7. Reviewing the membership file, reevaluating the current members to make sure if their work is still within PITA's field of specialty.
8. Returning to Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency Board of Directors.
9. Emphasizing that only members who pay their membership fees; can be provided with PITA's services.
10. Working in accord with PITA's strategic goals to ensure its members' efficiency.
11. Enhancing the role of the executive team.
12. Increasing PITA's participation in the international forums.
13. Forming capacity building programs



Upcoming Events

1. **CPX 360 2020 (Asia), Bangkok-Thailand, 14 - 16 January 2020.** CPX 360 conference provides insights and information about how to prevent the latest cyber threats and offers a variety of keynotes, conference sessions, and hands-on labs.
2. **European Blockchain Convention Barcelona- Spain, 20 - 21 January 2020.** Blockchain Convention Barcelona brings together 600 + tech leaders, regulators, investors, corporations, developers and entrepreneurs from the industry with a focus on real-world use of blockchain and DLT in industries such as energy, finance, supply chain, government, insurance, healthcare, retail and mobility.
3. **Deep Learning Summit, 30 - 31 January 2020, San Francisco, CA.** This event looks to "bridge the gap" between the latest tech advances in machine learning and AI and real world apps.
4. **MSPWorld 2020, 15 - 17 March 2020, New Orleans, LA.** MSPWorld offers a vendor-agnostic focus on Managed Service providers and their respective ecosystems, based on real-world experiences and successes in the managed services industry.
5. **GESS, Istanbul, 2 - 4 April 2020 / Dubai, 25 - 27 February 2020.** GESS is a platform to launch products and ideas in the Middle East education market and reach out to the widest target audience. It is a 3 days of inspirational talks dynamic, hands-on workshops from global industry leaders and influential local experts to enable educational suppliers to access and make connections with decision makers in the education sector.

Why Participating is important ?

- Knowledge-sharing
- Keep pace with the changing world
- Strengthen the professional ties
- Challenge and grow
- Identify needs and challenges in ICT sector
- Essential factor for economic growth
- Creating Opportunities and enhancing Capacity and understanding

PITA's Latest Activities

- **30th /12/2019, Ramallah;** PITA has held the Power Breakfast meeting that included an open discussion with H.E Dr. Ishaq Sider- the Minister of Telecom. and Information Technology, with Telecom. and Internet Service Providers' companies. The meeting aimed at finding ways to develop this sector and identifying the challenges and the obstacles that hinder the development process. It was a fruitful discussion that came up with a set of recommendations and insisted on forming committees to guarantee the implementation process.
- **18th/12/2019, Ramallah;** PITA has implemented the AgriTech workshops in partnership with Spark Co. for Training and Consulting, they have taken place in Hebron, Ramallah and Tulkarem. These workshops are part of PITA's endeavor's to support the AgriTech sector in Palestine for the purposes of preparing a detailed report and developing a baseline study regarding the AgriTech Field. The workshops included different stakeholders including; workers, experts, private companies, academic professors from different faculties (Engineering, Agriculture and Information Technology), students and entrepreneurs. This study is within the project "Innovation and ICT Sector Development as a Tool for Peace and Prosperity in Palestine" that PITA is currently implementing with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in cooperation with the Government of Japan. The project aims to identify AgriTech innovative technological solutions to support the Palestinian economy and the agricultural sector in specific, to build knowledge and partnership platform and to reach a better understanding of the potential of integrating Information Technology with the Agricultural sector in order to



- **18th/12/2019, Gaza;** PITA has participated in the final ceremony of the "FreeSoft" project. The ceremony was carried out by the faculty of Information Technology at the Islamic University. The project was conducted in partnership with PITA, PICTI and the European Foundation for Training and Development. This project aims to increase employment opportunities for IT graduates by qualifying them academically and professionally in the field of self-employment and software export and so strengthening the software export sector.
- **17th/12/2019, Gaza;** Within the follow-up of the "Cash for work" project, PITA has carried out several visits to its members' companies to review their legitimate work progress. This project is implemented by PITA in partnership with the UNRWA and funded by Qatar Committee. PITA is keen to support its members as well as support the ICT graduates and help them to acquire the necessary skills for entering the labor market.
- **16th/12/2019, Ramallah;** PITA has met with a delegation from ANERA to discuss ways of cooperation regarding the training for employability in both West Bank and Gaza Strip; since ANERA seeks to train and build the capacities of the graduates in the ICT field.
- **15th/12/2019, Gaza;** PITA has participated in a workshop organized by the Belgian Agency for Development "Enable". The workshop aimed to discuss the "Youth Empowerment" project and the component of creative clubs to identify the private sector's perspective.
- **14th/12/2019, Ramallah;** PITA has held a meeting with Telecommunications and Internet Service Providers' Companies. The meeting pointed to the main issues and problems this sector is suffering from. Hence; it placed the sector's priorities in discussing and building working techniques of how to develop and enhance this sector, face its challenges and increase its investments. In a nutshell; improving the environment and the working conditions of the sectors and its affiliated companies.
- **7th/12/2019, Gaza;** PITA has participated in the first meeting of the preparatory committee for the first International Conference in Information Technology and Business - ICITB 2020. The meeting was attended by the President of Gaza University, representatives from the Ministry of Telecom. and IT, PITA's members, the Information Technology Syndicate, the UTM University of Malaysia and the Banking Sector. The aim of the meeting was to discuss the important current arrangements that must be made and to enhance the participation of related institutions.



PITA's New Members 2018 – 2019

(Gaza and Ramallah)

<p>شركة صبري البريم وشريكه عبد الله البريم</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>		<p>Advanced Technologies for Business</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>	
<p>Auxilium Technology</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>		<p>Synergy Company</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>	
<p>HYPER TECH</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>		<p>ORCAS</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>	
<p>Rwad Al Tayseer Company</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>		<p>Wegroup</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>	
<p>Tatwer</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>		<p>Hexa For Information Technology</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>	
<p>Inspire IT Solutions</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>		<p>Tweets Tec</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>	
<p>IT Venue</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>		<p>Shift ICT</p> <p>اضغط هنا</p>	

Be A Member ! <http://home.pita.ps/wp/join-pita/>

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