

Expotech 2008: Palestine ICT Exhibition



Expotech took place within the period from the 4th–6th of Nov.2008 for the fifth consecutive year in Ramallah and the second in Gaza in parallel, in spite of the difficult economical & political situation facing them.

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PICTI Announced the Winners of the Digital Arabic Content Competition

Technology Business Plan Contest



During the last quarter of the year 2008, PICTI launched the 2nd Technology Business Plan Contest which was designed, organized and managed by PICTI and sponsored by Intel Company.

In order to reach the largest segment of entrepreneurs and innovative people, PICTI held several workshops in its premises and in some Palestinian universities regarding "Building of a Business Plan". Also during our participation at EXPOTECH exhibition, PICTI also managed to introduce the Business Plan Contest to the wide variety of visitors.

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Letter from PITA Chairman

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We begin this year with great hopes for our ICT sector and Palestinian economy. This hope –despite the current political turmoil - is manifested in the strategic interventions which PITA created through its programs and initiatives in the year 2008. We still strongly believe that our mission in 2009 should also remain around shaping the future of the Palestinian ICT sector and building on the previous successful initiatives to make the sector as a major pillar in the Palestinian economy.

As you read through this edition of Connect, you will observe that the different activities initiated during the last quarter are directed towards two levels:

1.Strategic planning for PITA intervention in the market

2.Direct activities to support the positioning of the ICT sector

The strategic planning workshop aimed at giving PITA an overall perspective to the general business environment and the need to solidify cooperation with all players in our market. The participation of all stakeholders affecting the ICT sector such as the government, educational institutions, representative of other economic sectors and trade associations gave the study an added value and wider perspective.

Allow me to cite one important recommendation of this workshop that shows the strategic planning of our approach to the market: the need to develop Human Capital skills and create better interaction with the educational institutions to satisfy the needs of the private ICT sector. This is one of the major priorities in the year 2009 and I invite you to visit PITA website to read the whole study: www.pita.ps

The other activities are directed towards positioning the ICT sector as a major pillar in the economic development of the Palestinian economy which ranged between participation at regional and international forums and conferences, different workshops, review of current telecommunications law and taking a position to ensure the creation of an independent regulatory body and participation in all local economic initiatives especially the Techno Park Project that will serve our members and promote foreign direct investments in Palestine.

Further, PITA focused on delivering services that fit its strategic intervention and outlook at the market, especially in the Firm Level Assistance Track. We always remind ourselves that PITA was created to deliver exceptional services to its constituents to lead to an overall development of the ICT sector.

This is the fourth edition of Connect newsletter and I hope you would enjoy reading it and find it interesting and enlightening at the same time!

Best Wishes,
Ala Alaeddin



Visit of US Deputy Commercial Officer & Trade Representative (USTR) to PITA

PITA arranged for a Video Conference with Washington DC after holding a fruitful meeting with the Deputy Commercial Officer & Trade Representative (USTR) at PITA headquarters.

The meeting was attended by US Government visitors, Ms. Naomi Weigler (the West Bank/Israel Desk Officer at the U.S. Department of Commerce), Ms. Sonia Franceski (the West Bank/Israel Representative at the Office of the USTR) and Mr. James Cramer (Deputy Senior Commercial Officer) and Mr. Assad Barsoum (Senior Commercial Specialist) who discussed with PITA chairman, Mr. Ala Alaeddin, Mr. Ihab Jabari & PITA members in West Bank & Gaza, market access cases that the Palestinian ICT companies are facing on a daily basis as well as the Israeli measures that hinder the development of the ICT sector in the West Bank and Gaza.

Washington DC discussed with PITA Ramallah & Gaza through Digital Video Conference

Moreover, the digital video conference connected Washington, with PITA Ramallah & Gaza,

PITA members spoke in the conference along with the following on the US side

- Randall Reade, North Virginia Technology Council
- Ayman Adhair, President and CEO, Global Integrated Management Consulting (former VP for Bearing Point Emerging Markets)

- Karen Myers, VP Government Relations, Computer Associates

- Fred Aziz, Commerce, MAS IT Office, US Department of Commerce



The DVC Session discussed outsourcing possibilities and how to enter the US market.

The following presentations were discussed:

- a. Fred Aziz: Overview of the U.S. Software Market
- b. Randall Reade: How Foreign IT Companies Can Enter the U.S. Market
- c. Ayman Adhair: Strengthening the ICT Sector – International and Regional Perspectives
- d. Eric Chasin: Overview of the NAFITH Project

“Palestinian Delegation to the International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2009 in Las Vegas”



The Palestinian IT Association of Companies (PITA) and U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem were pleased to support the International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) 2009, which was held in Las Vegas, January 8-11, 2009, as a leading show in the Consumer Electronics market.

The Palestinian Delegation to this show consisted of Palestinian businesspeople from private companies and educational institutions.

This Show was an opportunity for Palestine, where the delegation had the following benefits:

- A List of exhibitors who export or express an interest in exporting to the group's country and/or region of the world.
- Complimentary Exhibits Plus Pass, for access to all exhibits, TechZones, Super Sessions and keynote addresses.





PITA Arranged for Joint R&D Projects with CISCO



PITA is looking forward to create new qualified resources in the market and raise the capacity of its companies. The final outcome of this project is to enable two or three Palestinian companies to create new qualified resources with international standards to implement joint R&D projects with big companies such as CISCO.

In support of this initiative PITA arranged meetings with CISCO Company to open new horizons of cooperation for its members. After the first round of discussions with CISCO and their initial contacts with PITA companies, CISCO sought cooperation with companies who can work in an outsourcing project for a CISCO product that might use the following technologies:

1. Java 2. Unix 3. SQL 4. Basic Networking 5. Web services
The project aims at training at least 30 fresh graduates on specific skills needed to implement a joint R&D project with CISCO. Two or Three Palestinian companies will hire two-three teams from the trainees to work on the joint R&D projects with CISCO.

Cisco team really believed in this initiative and was willing to do a lot in order to make it happen.

On the other hand, Cisco has approved a grant to PITA for creating sustainable development through training. Cisco will invest 800K from the 10million in the first year for R & D through PITA for its companies. The main concept of this CSR investment is to qualify as many as possible companies and build their capacity to be better outsourcing partners.

CISCO Workshop on Global Talent Acceleration Program (GTAP) At PITA Headquarters

PITA arranged for a session with Cisco lead by Mr. John Livingston for Palestinian ICT Executives to discuss the Global Talent Acceleration Program (GTAP), moreover to check whether this initiative will help Palestinian companies obtain new fresh trained resources and whether this training will help companies.

The goal of Global Talent Acceleration Program (GTAP) is to accelerate local technical talent growth.

The session's main focus was planning the program for interested companies, including:

- 1- Establish business objectives for the program
 2. Business model (who pays what, who benefits, and how)
 3. Sourcing, screening, selection of candidates
 4. Curriculum
 5. Cohort schedule
 6. Implementation project plan
- Four tracks were agreed on:
- Pre-Sales System Engineer (SE)
 - Pre-Sales Account Manager (AM)
 - Services Customer Support Engineer (CSE)
 - (TAC) (this would only apply to the possible TAC w/estarta)

Services Network Consulting Engineer (NCE)
Product Development Engineer (aka, CDO Engineer)

Cisco's preliminary model would have the interested private sector companies pick the candidates among college graduates or current employees and pay their salaries or per diems for an estimated 4-6 months while they're in Jordan, while Cisco would pay for training cost in Jordan for that 4-6 months period. Graduates would then return back to Palestine and contribute to the local economy by working for their sponsors in the field of networking.

Palestinian ICT Business Development Project

Following the study on Outsourcing Potential for Palestinian IT Companies that was conducted by David Ross, PITA held meetings for interested companies with Mr. Nick White – Consultant (Consulting & Interim Management Solutions Ltd.- United Kingdom) as a joint project with Mercy Corps.

The main focus of the meeting was Consultancy: ICT market assessment and mapping, with the following objectives:

1. To map and profile Palestinian and Israeli ICT sector companies and to identify niche areas of cooperation and third party investment through engagement with at least 200 ICT companies.
2. To collect baseline assessment data on knowledge, attitudes, and practices of Palestinian and Israeli ICT companies toward risks, assets, and opportunities related to joint business activities.
3. To Identify areas for Palestinian and Israeli ICT business partnerships, niche areas of cooperation and market needs
4. To highlight the Israeli ICT sector unmet market demands for labour, products and outsourcing.
5. To align Palestinian and Israeli ICT companies with intressectoral interests, and point to areas where the Palestinian sector require technical assistance to increase their competitive edge and enhance capacity for partnership with Israeli companies
6. To examine key areas for potential third party investment in joint ventures
7. To publish findings that highlight the mutual benefits of Israeli-Palestinian engagement to promote joint Palestinian-Israeli ICT business partnerships which will be followed in time by joint initiatives with European companies

The successful meetings led to the "Palestinian ICT Business



Development Project". The Project will be funded by the British Consulate-General in Jerusalem and implemented by MercyCorps in partnership with Intellect (UK), and PITA. The project aims to map and profile Palestinian and Israeli ICT sector companies and to identify niche areas of cooperation and third party investment. Members were requested to fill in a Web questionnaire in support of this important initiative.



PITA held a meeting with Google Company Officials who were eager to learn more about the Palestinian ICT Sector.

Google was represented by the Director for Middle East and Africa, Ms. Gisel Hiscok, and Jens Redmer, Director of Business Development.

PITA was headed by Mr. Ala Alaeldeen, PITA Chairman and Mr. Ihab Jabari, PITA CEO, who welcomed and introduced PITA and the ICT Sector.

While Dr. Sabri Saidam, and Mr. Suliman Zuhair, Deputy Minister of the MTIT talked about the ICT Sector of Palestine in a national sense. Mr. Laith Kassis, PICTI CEO talked about entrepreneurship in Palestine.

Google officials were impressed and they discussed an initial outlook and interests in the Palestinian market.



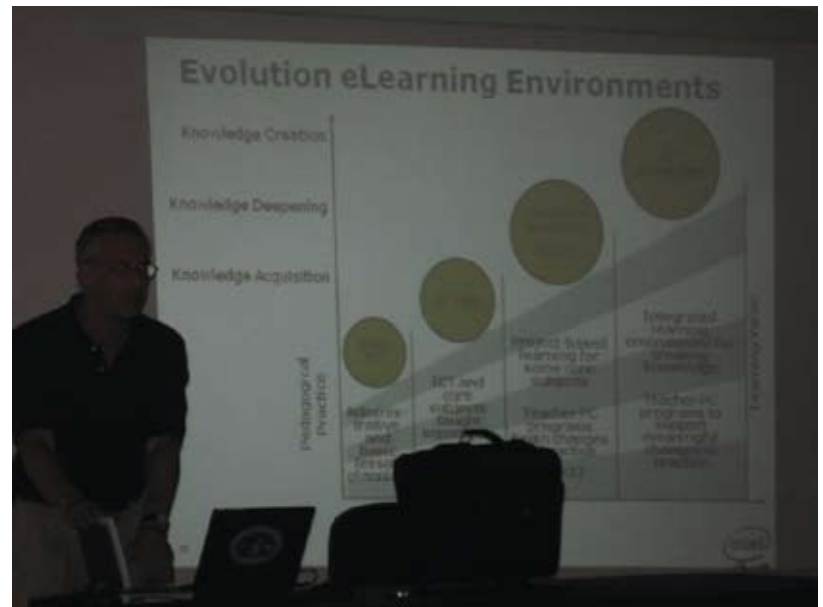
INTEL World Ahead Program



The 'World Ahead Program' from Intel; appears to be exceptionally attractive, valuable and of great advantage to students in Palestine. Mr. Robert Fogel (Intel, World Ahead, Principal Education Architect) held an exclusive workshop for deploying 21st Century 1:1 eLearning at PITA headquarters. The workshop introduced Intel's latest worldwide experiences, best practices, technologies, solutions and programs that best prepare children to be successful in today's global economy, and that increase social wellbeing and national competitiveness while boosting local economic growth. It was a significant opportunity for brainstorming and discussion on how 21st Century 1:1 eLearning is best applied for Palestine. It helped IT vendors know how to build, deliver and support an eLearning solution to the Ministry of Education upon their request.

Main issues and topics that were discussed:

- Gaining a common understanding of what 21st Century 1:1 eLearning is and examining best practices from eLearning deployments around the world
- Selecting the best technology and solutions for implementing 21st Century 1:1 eLearning
- Helping teachers be better prepared and confident to teach most effectively with 1:1 eLearning
- Working with local and global industry to help fund, deliver and support 1:1 eLearning solutions and programs
- Building robust education communities for sharing best practices, community-generated content and eLesson plans
- Establishing success metrics to ensure that education objectives are achieved
- Using a proof-of-concept (POC) to validate and improve a 1:1 eLearning solution



Intel is committed to addressing the needs of 21st Century education worldwide. Over 70 countries are now using the Intel-powered Classmate PC which is a laptop that is specifically designed for students and was shown to the attendants. Intel Teach® program has provided professional development to over 5 million teachers in more than 40 countries.

The Ministry of Education, PITA and Offtec (engaged in deploying the up-coming pilot project for schools) together can help improve education by better preparing students for higher education; by equipping school graduates to seek better-paying and higher-skilled, local jobs; and, enabling our children to benefit from life-long eLearning.

“Future for Palestine”- Joint Palestinian-German Initiative

In the framework of the Joint Palestinian-German Initiative “Future for Palestine”, PITA, PICTI and the German Representative Office held a workshop at PITA Headquarters “IT Development in Palestinian-German Cooperation”

The aim of the workshop was to bring Palestinian and German academics, decision makers and practitioners in the IT industry together to discuss strategies of how to strengthen cooperation between Palestinian and German companies and universities. The aim is to receive the expertise on how to strategize this support best to increase

the cooperation in the IT sector.

The workshop was headed by Mr. Ala Alaeldeen, Chairman of PITA, Deputy Head of Mission Ms. Gudrun Isphording (May She Rest in Peace), Representative Office of the Federal Republic of Germany in Palestine, Mr. Suliman Zuhairy, Deputy Minister of Telecommunications and IT, Mr. Muhamad Mustafa, Head of Palestine Investment Fund (tbc) and Prof. Dr. Meinel, Hasso Plattner Institute.

An Overview was given about PITA, PICT and the Palestinian ICT Sector. Moreover, Dr. Adnan Yahya/ Birzeit University represented the Academic Side.

The issues discussed were:

- Opportunities for cooperation with the Private Sector presented by the German Foreign Office (Mr. Schon): Zuse Fellowship (on-the-job training).
- Qualifications of academic potential (Input by Prof. Meinel, University of Potsdam)
- Report and lessons learnt from previous cooperations and Proposals for the future (Input by Prof. Fuhrbach, University of Koblenz)
- Teach-the-Teacher, Teleteaching and Potentials, (Input by Prof. Meinel, University of Potsdam)
- Opportunities for cooperation with the Academic Sector: DAAD Fellowships, Teach-the-teacher Tele-teaching





PITA Delegation to MENA ICT Conference and Bissan Systems win the Arab GoldenChip Award

PITA is happy to announce that Bissan Systems have won the Arab Golden Chip Award as the Best Online System for Commerce. Congratulations to them. PITA participated at the conference with a delegation headed by the Chairman, Ala Alaeldeen and including members from different member Companies.

Three Palestinian companies: Bissan Systems, Al Tariq Systems, and YoyaLand -Hadara, were selected from many Arab companies by the Jury of the Arab Golden Chip to present their solution at the conference. The

Palestinian companies were among only 17 companies carefully chosen to participate for their innovation, potential and ability to penetrate the market.

Reaching the final stages and being nominated as Palestinian

products and solutions that show the advanced skills our sector owns and how complex and challenging our products are. PITA is pleased to be part of such a Gala event and pleased to be part of the efforts to market our Palestinian companies to be present not only in the Arab market but also in the international markets.

Congratulations to the Palestinian ICT sector and to Bissan Systems, Al Tariq Systems and Yooyaland.

We are all proud of you and your achievements.



ICT Palestinian Delegation at the London Business Forum

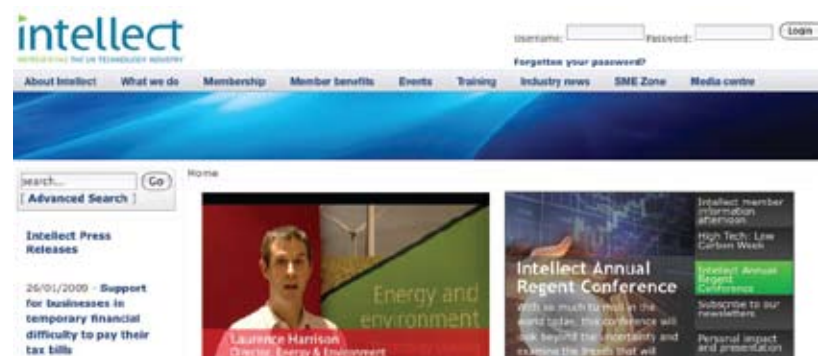
London Business Forum took place on December 15, 2008 to discuss different investment opportunities in Palestine and how to grow the Palestinian economy. ICT sector was the focal point at the conference and was stressed on how viable and important ICT is in Palestine.

Intellect (<http://www.intellectuk.org/>) hosted the B2B day for the ICT Palestinian delegation, which consisted of:

1. Dr. Sabri Saidam, 2. Ala Alaeddin, 3. Ibrahim Barham, 4. Said Baransi, 5. Tareq Mayaa, 6. Murad Tahboub, 7. Yahya AlSalqan, 8. Yasser Shantaf

Success Stories, Projects, Techno Park, Incubators, Venture Capitals were discussed at the forum.

One successful result was that of Al-Andalus Company (ASD) who signed a partnership contract with Telecom Service Company in the United Kingdom to establish a new company in the name of "Pre-Payment" in London, UK. Pre-Payment



Company will sell ASD products and E-vouchers from Telecom Service Company to Nigeria, Africa and other countries.

Mohammad Aweida Beitawi - General Manager of ASD signed the partnership with Yommi Cole, Executive Manager of Telecom Service Company

PITA Strategy and Policy Assessment Workshop

PITA held on August 27 & 28, 2008 in the Grand Park Hotel – Ramallah and in AlHilu Hall - Gaza a fruitful brain storming workshop in order to get a viable assessment of the strategic plan.

The workshop aimed at achieving two elements:

- 1- The prioritization of issues, development and promotion of the ICT sector.
- 2- An effective construction of 3-years ICT strategic plan through clear concept papers.

The workshop included:

- Four main sessions – every two sessions ran in parallel:
 - a. First session: Government Track
 - b. Second session: Education & Human Resource Development Track
 - c. Third session: Private Sector Development Track
 - d. Fourth session: Donors and NGO's Track

We would like to thank those who took part in "PITA Strategic Planning Session; their input was valuable in setting clear priorities for the development of the private ICT sector.

You can find the position paper as a result of the fruitful feedback on www.pita.ps, Resources, Documents.

Together we can make a change and lead the positioning of the ICT sector as an economic pillar of Palestine.





JAWWAL Services Workshop

As promised, PITA organized an important event around Jawwal services and their added value services in the market on Monday, August 25 at 3:30 at PITA offices in Ramallah and Gaza (video conferencing).

Mr. Ihab AlJabri , Executive Director of PITA welcomed the attendants, members of PITA, Jawwal employees and a number of others.

Attendants were able to talk directly to Ammar Akar, Head of Jawwal on all the issues that have been discussed on ITSIG and Mr. Florid Al Zurba, the officer in the MTIT on their role in the telecommunications industry.

The annexes of technology and the licenses given to providers by the Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology as well as basic and plus services offered were amongst the issues discussed while Jawwal discussed SMS services, Tawjihi incident and the issues of contracts with distributors.



More information about this important meeting can be found on www.pita.ps

PITA Welcomes Newest Members

Development Pioneers Company for Consultations (Pioneers)

Pioneers located in Gaza is an established organization that aims to provide managerial solutions and training programs to individuals or even to organizations, helping organizations everywhere to be more competitive, more efficient, more responsive and more effective. Pioneers technical experts have established a reputation for delivering practical solutions that are both business-driven and cost effective.

Next Communications Technologies Co. Ltd

Next located in Gaza was established in 1997 to provide telecommunications services using modern technology. The company has obtained a license to provide telecommunications services over the Internet (Voip) and a major Internet provider license Back Boon ISP ,the company currently provides International service Calling Cards Such As FarahTel, Weinak, Maak and also Next Mubasher service.

Mdar Co. for Management and Software

Mdar located in Gaza is specialized in management and software, such as Computer Hardware, IT Consultancy, Networking, Professional Technical Training, Software Development & Applications

PITA and Elham Palestine Partnership



There is a great potential that needs to be made explicit between PITA and Elham Palestine, who held several meetings to explore ways and means of consolidating and deepening the partnership locally, regionally and globally.

The two organizations will enter into a strategic partnership whose locus is Elham Palestine. A strategic partnership agreement will be made public at the Grand Fila Ceremony of Elham Palestine. The agreement will be signed by the top level decision makers of the two organizations.

The two organizations will make explicit their joint commitment to making learning environments (school, ICT, media and community) more conducive to young people's well- being. Elham Palestine commits to engage the Palestinian ICT private sector in its endeavor to enhance the Palestinian learning environments making them more conducive to children and young people's well- being.

While PITA will contribute to the design of the priority areas of focus and the eligibility conditions as well as the selection criteria for the cluster of ICT related nominations. By doing so, PITA will disseminate ICT based innovative thinking and inspire students and teachers to come up with creative ways of effectively integrating ICT enabled approaches in their teaching/learning practices and approaches.

Revitalizing the ICT Sector in Gaza

PITA held a workshop under the Presidency patronage of and the Cabinet on how to revitalize the ICT Sector in Gaza. Dr.Sabri Saidam and Dr. Jawad Naji lead the workshop together with PITA Chairman, Mr. Ala Alaeddin.

Brainstorming via video conference with Gaza took place about projects that can help in building & developing the ICT Sector in Gaza in order to overcome the terrible economic conditions and continuous closure.

ICT Diffusion as well as Educational & Health projects were proposed as a part of development. Moreover, Quality Assurance consultants to visit Gaza were amongst the issues discussed.

Dr. Sabri & Dr. Jawad in partnership with PITA agreed on joint projects & priorities for Gaza to revitalize and develop the ICT Sector in Gaza in spite of the occupation.



US Palestinian Partnership Delegation Visit Ramallah

A delegation representing US-Palestinian Private Partnership consisting of 42 higher executives of US based companies including ICT companies visited PITA/PICTI headquarters to check on the ICT potential and possible outsourcing/ business opportunities in Palestine.

The delegation was headed by Mr. Ziad Asali, President, American Task Force for Palestine and the members ,Jean Case, CEO, the Case Foundation, Toni Verstandig, Executive Director, the Aspen Institute's Middle East Strategy Group, Mickey Bergman, Program Director, U.S.-Palestinian Partnership, Michael D. Smith, Director, Social Investment, the Case Foundation, James K. Glassman, Under Secretary, Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State.

PITA planned a small exhibition of 8 companies & 5 start up companies who showed their capacities and solutions and discussed opportunities directly with the delegation. This was an important event that left a good mark for the ICT industry in Palestine and our companies will gain a huge advantage from it .



Technopark Project in Ramallah / Al-Bireh, Palestine



The Indian government is committed with US\$ 3.5 Million for the construction of a Technology Park in Ramallah, Palestine. In a rare display of public private partnership, the Palestine Information Technology Association (www.pita.ps) of companies, the Palestine Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Incubator (www.picti.ps) and the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology will evaluate the issues of planning and managing the Technology Park to be documented in a feasibility study.

A recent report indicated that the information and communication technology (ICT) sector is only employing 5000 professionals directly and indirectly, out of which only 3600 are IT professionals. The aim is to provide job opportunities to the qualified graduates reaching 15,000 - 20,000 over three years. Thus, providing qualitative jobs can lead to a stronger middle class where science and technology for development and creating mass job opportunities can be the new paradigm for improving the quality of life for Palestinians. Furthermore, the sector is predominantly focussed on telecommunication investment and regulations, while investment in the information technology still requires reform and development. PITA and PICTI believe that the information technology is in itself a productive sector and is an assistant to other sectors including, industrial and governmental services. Hence, there is an opportunity for the ICT sector to play a role in increasing industrial competitiveness, improving education and launching governmental services online. It is estimated that more than 50% of the Palestinian population is youth. No doubt that the ICT sector can also provide equal job opportunities, and females can actively participate in the job market in terms of quality and opportunities.



Expotech 2008: Palestine ICT Exhibition

Expotech took place within the period from the 4th – 6th of Nov. 2008 for the fifth consecutive year in Ramallah and the second in Gaza in parallel, in spite of the difficult economical & political situation facing them.

Expotech was successful at both professional & public levels, as 26 thousand people visited the exhibition in Ramallah, while 15 thousand people visited it in Gaza, with a 36% increase more than 2007. Media was also playing a huge role, as Expotech is the only & biggest technology show in Palestine.

Expotech had a new touch to it, a theme of Shopping, Hardware & Software. Each floor was dedicated to a certain service, where the first floor was open for direct sales, the second for Hardware & Telecommunication Hardware, and the third floor show illustrated the available software & solutions. The aim was for specialization in the different services that are required for the market and for the interested people.

60 leading technology companies participated in Expotech 2008, where also 5 companies from Gaza participated in Ramallah through their representatives who obtained great interest.

In spite of the closure on Gaza, one was able to see the live exhibition on a website, thanks to Shabab IT who took the initiative (<http://expotech.shababit.ps/index.php>). An important initiative as well was the ability for visitors to register online or during their visit, giving the ability to the exhibitors to identify and target their services.

Expotech witnessed the visit of the Minister of Telecommunication, Mr. Mohammad Kamal Hassounah, the Minister of Transportation, Mr. Mashhour Abu Daqqa, the Egyptian & Tunisian Embasssors and Mr. Jibreel AlRjoub, president of the Palestinian Football Federation.

For more information, news, pictures, visit: www.expotech.ps







After Announcing New Projects, PICTI Finishes its Successful Participation at Palestine's Expotech 2008

Palestine Information and Communications Technology Incubator (PICTI) had concluded its participation in the Palestine's technology exhibition and conference, (Expotech) 2008. The Exhibition took place in Al-Bireh Municipality Halls during the period from November 4th - 6th 2008.

Throughout its participation around 8,000 visitors have visited PICTI booth, whereby entrepreneurs and university students have demonstrated interest to learn more about PICTI, its incubation related services and projects that supports entrepreneurial talent and culture in Palestine.

According to Mr. Laith Kassis, the General Manager of PICTI, "The Palestinian Incubator believes that 2008 exhibition was a great opportunity to interact with future entrepreneurs in Palestine. Participating in this exhibition was part of PICTI's marketing events to communicate to the Expotech visitors, its wide range of services and support to this promising Palestinian sector. PICTI's contribution to this sector was highlighted through providing Palestinian entrepreneurs with an incubation environment as well as financial and technical services in order to nurture the talented and ambitious individuals in this society".

Mr. Kassis also added "PICTI was looking forward for Expotech 2008, to announce its innovative projects such as:

2nd Technology Business Plan Contest:

PICTI also invited entrepreneurs to participate in the 2nd Technology Business Plan Contest which is sponsored by Intel, however, it was designed, organized and managed by PICTI as this initiative is one of the tools towards achieving PICTI's strategic objective of working to identify and support the technical, intellectual and managerial talent of entrepreneurs who can become the backbone of a dynamic export market for ICT products in Palestine.

Mohammed Bin Rashid Foundation Partnership

PICTI also managed during its participation at Expotech 2008 to announce its strategic partnership with Mohammed Bin Rashid (MBR) Foundation which took place in Dubai to sustain the organization.

TeamStart - Palestine Project:

TeamStart-Palestine is an initiative to create high growth businesses in Palestine; the program is designed by PICTI, Mercy Corps, and the University of Warwick Science Park (UWSP)-United Kingdom and is funded by the British Consulate-General in Jerusalem.



TeamStart-Palestine provides participants with a full package of technical and business consultation, confidence and team building, business development training, marketing and sales techniques and practical business creation support. TeamStart joins innovative and creative entrepreneurial minds to help them create high growth, knowledge based businesses.

Digital Arabic Content Contest

ESCWA in cooperation with PICTI launched the Digital Arabic Content Contest during July 2008 which aimed at introducing the university graduates, businessmen, and start-ups with this industry in Palestine and to encourage them and give them the chance to participate in this contest and benefit from it through submitting their project ideas and prototypes. Therefore, PICTI took this opportunity and announced the Digital Arabic Contest (DAC) winners through its participation at Expotech 2008.



Innovative Entrepreneurs at PICTI's Booth

PICTI also provided the opportunity to 9 creative students, recent graduates and entrepreneurs to display their products as part of PICTI pavilion as a testimony that PICTI is the address to nurture Palestinian talent.

As its fifth participation, PICTI's participation in Expotech 2008 was crowned with success as it has met its objectives in reaching out to its stakeholder, communicating its services and programs as well as announcing new partnerships and fund.

The Palestine Information and Communications Technology Incubator (PICTI), is an independent Palestinian organization that has been created through the initiative and support of the Palestinian Information Technology Community, established 2004. PICTI and its partner organizations have as their mission the revitalization and the sustainable growth of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) sector in Palestine. Its mission is to will design, develop, implement and promote those initiatives that will support the development of entrepreneurial business ventures with high growth potential by providing them with an integrated package of world-class business development services that will nurture and support the commercialization of ideas and enhance the development and growth of dynamic enterprises.





(Continued from front page)

Technology Business Plan Contest

During the last quarter of the year 2008, PICTI launched the 2nd Technology Business Plan Contest which was designed, organized and managed by PICTI and sponsored by Intel Company.

In order to reach the largest segment of entrepreneurs and innovative people, PICTI held several workshops in its premises and in some Palestinian universities regarding "Building of a Business Plan". Also during our participation at EXPOTECH exhibition, PICTI also managed to introduce the Business Plan Contest to the wide variety of visitors.

During these workshops Mr. Laith Kassis, PICTI General Manager and Mr. Hasan Omar, PICTI IT & Operations Manager, introduced PICTI and its role and efforts in advancing the Palestinian community in the informatics sector through



incubating projects, establishing new companies, creating job opportunities, conducting related workshops and Business Plan Contest and how to apply for this contest.

These presentations aimed at introducing the attendants with the Business Plan contest and its components such as Company Information, Market, Industry, Competition, Production, Management,

Financial Planning and Modeling, and Projecting Financial Statements. PICTI business plan application was explained to all attendants and a case study was also discussed.

Also during the workshops discussions took place between the presenters and the attendants, and all questions raised were answered. Those who had specific questions regarding their business ideas were invited for special meetings in order to clarify all their questions.

It is worth mentioning that the deadline for receiving business concepts was November 7th, 2008; and immediately after that, PICTI started with the first round of evaluation, and by November 30th an invitation was sent to the shortlisted applicants informing them to submit their complete business plans by January 15th, 2009.

The Palestine Information & Communication Technology Incubator (PICTI) participated in the Asia-Africa Conference on Open Source Solutions – AAOS held in Jakarta - Indonesia

PICTI IT & Operations Manager, Mr. Hasan Omar represented PICTI at the Asia-Africa Conference on Open Source (AAOS) which was held in the Indonesian Capital, Jakarta, on November 18-19, 2008.

Mr. Omar said that the conference was held under the patronage of H.E. Dr. Mohammed Nuh the Indonesian Minister of Communication and Information Technology, and was attended by ministers, ambassadors and representatives of Asian & African countries of which on top of the attendants was Dr. Fariz Mahdawi the ambassador of to indonsa Palestine Ambassador. The conference aimed at exchanging expertise and experiences in Open Source Industry and Applications, and its impact on sustainable development and non dependence, especially in the developing countries. All participants agreed on the need for adopting Open Source Solutions due to its several advantages

which include: cost reduction, technical characteristics and legal usage. In order to reach the desired results, Eng. Omar said that along with the East Asian countries experience that has made great strides in this area, there is a need for governments to adopt and support the Open Source Solutions



During the conference, Eng. Omar made a presentation about the Open Source Solutions in Palestine. It's worth mentioning that the representatives of different countries such as Japan, Indonesia, Malaysia and South Africa presented their experience in this area

and the projects that handle Open Source Solutions in their own countries.

The conference concluded with in emphasis on the need for communication among all Asian and African countries to support the Open Source Solutions and exchange expertise and experiences.



The Palestine Information & Communication Technology Incubator (PICTI) Announced the Winners of the Digital Arabic Content Competition during its Participation at EXPOTECH Exhibition 2008



During its participation at the Palestinian IT Exhibition, Expotech 2008 the Palestine Information and Communication Technology Incubator (PICTI) announced the results of the Digital Arabic Content (DAC) Competition that was previously launched by PICTI and funded by the UN-ESCWA. The competition aimed at spreading awareness on the importance of Digital Arabic Content Industry and enriching it in the Arab World, due to the importance of supporting entrepreneurs in this sector, and to what this industry provides, such as employment opportunities for youth, and how it contributes to supporting the economic development as an investment opportunity in the ICT sector in the Arab Region.

This competition was launched through a workshop that was held at PICTI during the month of July 2008. The launch was followed by a marketing campaign on the local newspapers and PICTI's portal (all related information and materials such as the competition design, application form, evaluation criteria, prizes and others).



As a result of the evaluation which was conducted by PICTI and the ESCWA, the "Arabic Optical Character Recognition System" Project submitted by Messrs. Abdelkarim Ka'abneh & Mohammed Imlaihat was found to be the best project in the competition in Palestine. The Arabic OCR project will be incubated at PICTI for a period of 10-12 months starting in January 2009. It is worth mentioning that the incubation process will not be limited to providing the winners with office space only, but also the winners will be hosted in an appropriate environment to support and develop their project by providing them with an equipped office including computers, facsimile machine and internet usage, in addition to let the winners develop personal skills and capacities in different areas, such as administrative, marketing, strategic and communication skills and also to provide the winners with legal, developmental and marketing consultations and networking with investors and funders for the project.

Mr. Laith Kassis, PICTI General Manager, thanked the evaluation committee and praised the role of the UN-ESCWA in spreading awareness on the importance of Digital Arabic Content Industry and enriching it.

In his turn, Mr. Hasan Omar, PICTI IT & Operations Manager stated that PICTI had received 16 applications and that the deadline for receiving applications was July 30th, 2008. He also added that the evaluation process was conducted by a specialized committee (professionals from the business, communications, marketing and management sectors in cooperation with the UN-ESCWA) and that the evaluation criterion was prepared earlier by the UN-ESCWA.



Invitation to create high growth business

TeamStart-Palestine is a program designed by the Palestine Information & Communications Technology Incubator (PICTI) and Mercy Corps in cooperation with the University of Warwick Science Park (UWSP). Utilizing PICTI's resources and capabilities to develop new business ventures, TeamStart-Palestine will provide you with a full package of:

- Technical and Business Consultation
- Confidence and Team Building
- Business Development Training
- Marketing and Sales Techniques and
- Practical Business Creation Assistance

TeamStart joins innovative and creative entrepreneurial minds to help them create high growth, knowledge based businesses.

PICTI in partnership with Mercy Corps are looking for people with sound business ideas and with the requisite skills needed to create viable businesses to join the TeamStart-Palestine Program which is funded by the British Consulate-General in Jerusalem. Mercy Corps, through its ICT Business Development Project that aims at Investing in Peace through ICT Business Cooperation and Capacity Building, will fund technology startups for innovative and feasible business concepts developed through the TeamStart-Palestine Program.

A commitment fee will be charged to candidates who are selected to join TeamStart-Palestine, as space is limited. If you believe you have the needed capabilities and possess the right attitude to join a "success oriented" team of entrepreneurs, please send a cover letter and your CV to: teamstart@picti.ps , for more information call 02-240-9290



www.picti.ps
02-240-9290



British
Consulate-General
Jerusalem



www.mercycorps.org
02-628-4563



PITA Overview

The Palestinian Information Technology Association (PITA) was founded in early 1999 in Ramallah, Palestine as a membership-based organization for domestically-registered companies in the ICT sector. The association represents 75 companies from various sub-sectors including hardware distributors, software development firms, office automation vendors, Internet service providers, telecommunications, ICT consulting, ICT training and related businesses.

Our Purpose

To represent the collective interests of the private IT sector in Palestine

Our Vision

To lead the positioning of the ICT sector as the economic pillar of Palestine

Mission Statement

To promote and defend the private ICT sector by advocating business-enabling policies, mechanisms and environment through public/private partnership.

Promoting the Palestinian ICT sector locally and internationally by facilitating access to markets that benefit PITA members.

Engaging the technical and non-technical ICT human resources and related institutions in-order to expand the pool of qualified ICT sector personnel and uphold its professional standards

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PICTI Overview

Mission Statement: PICTI's mission is to design, develop and implement initiatives that will lead to the creation of innovative entrepreneurial enterprises focused on ICT. Key competitive advantages of PICTI include its governance structure that provides access to economic clusters, its dedicated staff with incubation know-how, its clients, and an initiative underway to structure a seed fund for the benefit of pre-revenue start-up companies incubated at PICTI. PICTI aims to develop the Palestinian Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector as a means of generating new jobs, attracting foreign investment and improving the economic situation in the Palestinian territories.

Strategic Objective: Political uncertainty and difficult economic conditions continue to severely impact the ability of Palestine's ICT sector to efficiently, effectively, or competitively gain access to markets for its goods and services. The specific actions required to overcome these impediments will be a key focus of PICTI in the design, development, and implementation of the ICT sector support infrastructure to be established. PICTI will craft promotions and marketing strategies that will separately and uniquely focus on the development of, and access to, business opportunities in regional and international markets for Palestinian ICT firms. But most importantly, PICTI will identify and support the technical, intellectual and managerial talent of young entrepreneurs who can become the backbone of a dynamic export market for ICT products and services in Palestine.

Global Market Focus: PICTI utilizes a diverse network of industry professionals that will help identify and assess future ICT development trends where high-value-added regional and/or international niche markets will emerge. Within these niche technology applications, it will be necessary to identify those that will be applicable to a wide cross section of industry sectors and that will maintain strong, sustainable growth acceleration into the future. The Incubator will work closely with its client firms to channel and focus their entrepreneurial zeal and technical talent into developing those expertise required for successful entrée into these valuable niche markets.

PICTI Partners: A partnership agreement between the founding partners, PITA, Palestine Banking Corporation (PBC), and PalTrade, resulted in the establishment of PICTI. USAID funded PICTI operations for three years, with this support expiring on September 29, 2006. Paltel Group replaced the PBC as of November 2006.

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