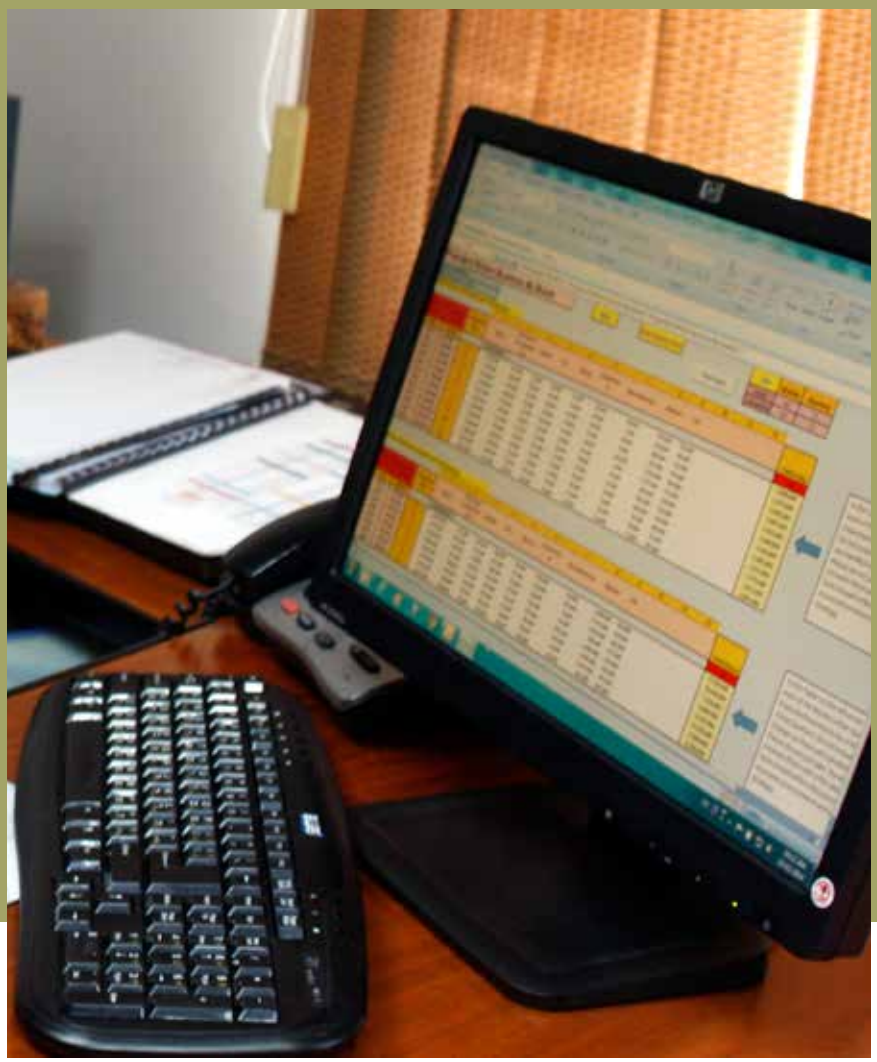
THE STATE OF PALESTINE
NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY

FUNCTIONAL STRATEGIES
TRADE INFORMATION 2014-2018



فلسطين
وزارة الاقتصاد الوطني الفلسطينية
Ministry of National Economy

International Trade Centre

PALTRADE
مركز التجارة الفلسطيني - بال تريد
PALESTINE TRADE CENTER

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ACRONYMS

BWF	Business Women Forum
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CoC	Palestinian Chambers of Commerce
FPCCIA	Palestinian Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture
ITC	International Trade Centre
MAS	Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute
MoFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoNE	Ministry of National Economy
MoPAD	Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise
NDP	National Development Plan
NES	National Export Strategy
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PAPP	Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People
PBA	Palestinian Businessmen Association
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PEC	Palestinian Export Council
PFI	Palestine Federation of Industries
PIPA	Palestine Investment Promotion Agency
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PoA	Plan of Action
PSC	Palestinian Shippers' Council
PSI	Palestine Standards Institution
PTFP	Palestinian Trade Facilitation Portal
TI	Trade Information
TSI	Trade Support Institution
TSN	Trade Support Network
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Reliable and timely access to trade information is an important prerequisite for developing export competitiveness; however, this field has by and large been neglected in the State of Palestine. Until recently, explicit focus on issues related to trade information has been missing from Palestinian government plans, legislation, studies and development programmes. However, this trend is now changing with growing cognizance ong both policymakers and the private sector of the relevance of trade information to success in the export value chain.

CURRENT STATE OF PALESTINIAN TRADE INFORMATION FUNCTION

The following broad category of trade information needs have been identified for Palestinian exporters:

- Promotional tools information
- Market access conditions, including trade agreements
- Sanitary/phytosanitary and private standards
- Market size/buyers/competition
- Market analysis
- Logistics information
- Business opportunities
- Business and buyer contacts
- Names of importers and distributors
- Tariffs
- Laws and regulations
- Export-related customs procedures.

Palestinian enterprises mostly use international databanks and information provided by international institutions to manage their trade information needs. Local sources, such as chambers of commerce, ministries are also utilized, although there is no efficient and coordinated information network to easily satisfy the needs of enterprises. The main focal point for information is the Palestinian Trade Centre (PalTrade), which is the national trade development organization and is supported by the membership of 327 private businesses.

COMPETITIVENESS CONSTRAINTS

Competitiveness constraints related to trade information can be divided along two dimensions – policy and institutional level constraints relating to legislative matters and service delivery of TSIs on the one hand, and enterprise level constraints that relate to capacity gaps within enterprises vis-à-vis the trade information function on the other.

Policy and institutional level constraints include:

- Lack of availability of publically available trade information;
- High costs of market research reports;
- Poor advocacy among trade information providers;
- Lack of policy focus on trade information;
- Weak coordination among trade support institutions (TSIs);
- Inadequate integration of Palestinian consulates and trade representations within the trade information function;
- Lack of service focus outside Ramallah;
- Weak service delivery of chambers of commerce.

Enterprise level constraints include:

- A general lack of networking and cross-pollination of information among enterprises;
- A lack of integration of trade information (TI) within the decision-making framework of Palestinian enterprises.

CHOICES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Improvements within the trade information function constitute a critical prerequisite for unlocking the State of Palestine's export competitiveness. Keeping this in mind, the following vision has been developed for the function:

Source: © Tomorrow's Youth Organization. FWEN Training Events 2010

> "Establish a trade information architecture, supported by the government, TSIs and the private sector, for easy and timely access to a wide range of TI sources."

The following will be key features of the future shape of the trade information function, underlying the vision. These critical elements are all addressed through the activities of the cross-sector's strategic plan of action:

- A clearly visible network of TI providers, with improved coordination and collaboration and with limited gaps and redundancies;
- Detailed information about countries of destination in relation to Palestinian trade – specific sectors, markets and products – provided through an easily accessible platform;
- Improved capacity at the enterprise level to leverage existing sources of trade information, and synergize information sources to their advantage.
- Enhance coordination levels within the Palestinian trade information network to reduce gaps and redundancies in service delivery;
- Provide more comprehensive and better quality trade information to exporting enterprises;
- Build the capacity of enterprises to use trade information effectively in decision-making related to exports.

ROADMAP FOR STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The vision and the key features for the function will be achieved through the implementation of the strategy's Plan of Action (PoA), which revolves around the following three strategic objectives, each spelling out specific sets of activities intended to address both challenges and opportunities of the trade information function in the State of Palestine:

The achievement of these objectives will require continuous and coordinated efforts from all relevant private and public stakeholders, as well as support from key financial and technical partners, donors and investors. Several institutions are designated to play a leading role in the implementation of the strategy's PoA and bear the overall responsibility for successful execution of the strategy. They will be assisted by a range of support institutions that are active in the trade information function. Each institution mandated to support the development of the export function is clearly identified in the strategy PoA.

Moreover, the proposed Palestinian Export Council (PEC) and its Executive Secretariat will play a coordinating and monitoring role in the implementation of the strategy within the overall framework of the National Export Strategy. In particular, PEC will be tasked with coordinating the implementation of activities in order to optimize the allocation of both resources and efforts across the wide spectrum of stakeholders.

Box 1: Building blocks for the trade information cross-sector strategy

The following analytical components are the building blocks for the trade information cross-sector strategy.

Current state of the Palestinian trade information function

This section discusses the relevance of trade information for Palestinian export development and provides an overview of the national framework. This overview serves as the basis for a broader analysis of the performance and efficiency of the trade information function in the State of Palestine.

Competitiveness constraints

The effectiveness and efficiency of trade information is currently restricted because of a host of constraints both at the institutional (supply side) and enterprise (demand side) levels. These wide-ranging constraints have resulted in restricted access to international markets for Palestinian exporters. The competitiveness constraints section discusses these important challenges and their impact on current and potential exporters.

Trade Support Network (TSN) analysis

Trade support institutions (TSIs) are organizations that have a bearing on the development and delivery of trade information services in the State of Palestine. An analysis of the effectiveness and capacity gaps affecting these TSIs is important to ascertain the efficiency of the entire trade information framework.

The TSN analysis section assesses individual TSIs on their capacities in areas such as coordination, financial sustainability, human capital, and advocacy. Analysis is also conducted to assess the TSIs based on their level of influence versus their capacity to respond to client needs. A composite picture is developed of the strengths and weaknesses of the cross-sector's TSN.

Analysis of development activity for the Palestinian trade information function

Gaining an understanding of development activity in the cross-sector is relevant because it helps to identify the main thrusts of the various development actors and their initiatives, while also identifying gaps that need to be addressed. This section analyses current levels of development activity for trade information.

How we get there

The roadmap section highlights the key elements of the strategy for the trade information cross-sector function and discusses the way forward. This includes the vision for the cross-sector, the strategic objectives, and the implementation management framework.

The analyses and recommendations are based on national level consultations supported by external analytical research. Once endorsed by the government of the State of Palestine, the trade information strategy will serve as the main roadmap for private and public stakeholders to improve trade information access for exporters.

INTRODUCTION

Successful navigation of international markets hinges upon the ability of both the private and public sectors to leverage trade information. Current market information allows firms to understand the commercial landscape of both existing and potential markets. Such data facilitates the continued competitiveness of products and may permit enterprises to capitalize upon emerging opportunities. Reliable information can be used to stay ahead of new trends and demands, thereby allowing enterprises to design, develop, and modify products based on the requirements of target markets. Moreover, reliable information on international standards and regulations allows exporters to design products in accordance with compliance principles of target markets. This is a prerequisite for market penetration, and a well-functioning trade information sector would therefore contribute to diversification by facilitating the expansion of both geographic and product markets.

The trade information strategy presented in this document is an integral part of the National Export Strategy (NES) of the State of Palestine. The efficiency of the trade information network in the State of Palestine will contribute a great deal to the export performance of the key priority sectors of the NES. This document presents the expectations and strategic objectives of the private and public sectors for an improved trade information function in the State of Palestine. It is clear that without concerted efforts to address critical issues this function, which is vital for trade development, will not satisfy the needs of exporters.

The analysis and recommendations of this document focus on key organisational, technical and skills development challenges that can be resolved through a structured partnership of trade information institutions. There is significant scope for empowering exporters' market entry and development through strengthened and more dynamic trade information.

WHERE WE ARE NOW

CURRENT STATE OF THE PALESTINIAN TRADE INFORMATION FUNCTION

Industrial enterprises in the State of Palestine have expressed the need for the following types of trade information, in descending order of importance:

- Promotional tools
- Market access conditions
- Market size/buyers/competition
- Market analysis
- Logistics information
- Business opportunities
- Business and buyer contacts
- Names of importers & distributors
- Tariffs & regulations.[1]

1. Jud, Veronica/International Trade Centre (2012). *Export Development in Occupied Palestinian Territory: Strengthening of PalTrade Information Services.* ITC.

There is a considerable lack of trade information in the State of Palestine relating to current and potential target markets in terms of market developments, trends, culture and other relevant factors for exporting products. For both basic and specific information, enterprises have to refer to international databanks and other forms of trade information provided by international institutions. Often the trade information gathered through this route is generic: it is not conditioned to the needs of Palestinian stakeholders, nor does it refer to the specific relationship between the respective target countries and the State of Palestine.

Box 2: Importance of trade information for building export competitiveness

Access to up-to-date market intelligence plays an integral role in a number of trade-related issues, among which are market penetration, product design and development, and standards and regulatory compliance. Trade information services generally include the dissemination of information related to standards, regulations and import/export requirements; raising awareness of trade-related laws and international agreements; and the publication of data about products, trends, and markets.

The following is a partial list of trade information services that are useful for current and emerging exporters:

- Publication of standards and regulations of target markets;
- Dissemination of import and export requirements;
- Publication of, and information about, trade-related laws and international agreements;
- Provision of databases on domestic products and sectors, as well as on those of destination countries;
- Provision of databases on market developments and trends;
- Counselling of potential exporters and importers;
- Conducting research and publication of studies about markets and trade environment.

The related service of trade promotion can also enrich the trade information landscape. Trade promotion involves leveraging a country's resources in order to connect with international counterparts. It assists enterprises in visiting and participating in international trade fairs and exhibitions, where firms can learn of market requirements and enrich their knowledge of the competitive landscape. Networks with foreign trade support institutions also facilitate the diffusion of international know-how and best practices within the domestic market.

- Trade information is important for the following aspects of market development:
- Consolidate and expand on current markets;
- Identify, analyse, select and conquer new markets;
- Obtain information about market developments and tendencies;
- Discover and explore market niches;
- Identify market segments;
- Design and implement marketing plans;
- Design strategies for commercial promotion and post-sales;
- Structure distribution channels;
- Identify current and future competitors.

A 2012 ITC survey conducted with PalTrade clients yielded important findings on their main trade information requirements. The survey plots, by type of information, the percentage of enterprises requesting it in order to facilitate their exports to international markets.

INDUSTRIAL VS. SERVICE SECTOR TRADE INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

Surveys were conducted with 313 industrial sector companies and 44 service sector companies.

Information on promotional tools, such as exhibitions, conferences, and publications, is the most frequently sought type of information for the industrial sector, whereas information on business and buyer contacts and new business opportunities are the information types most demanded by enterprises in the service sector.

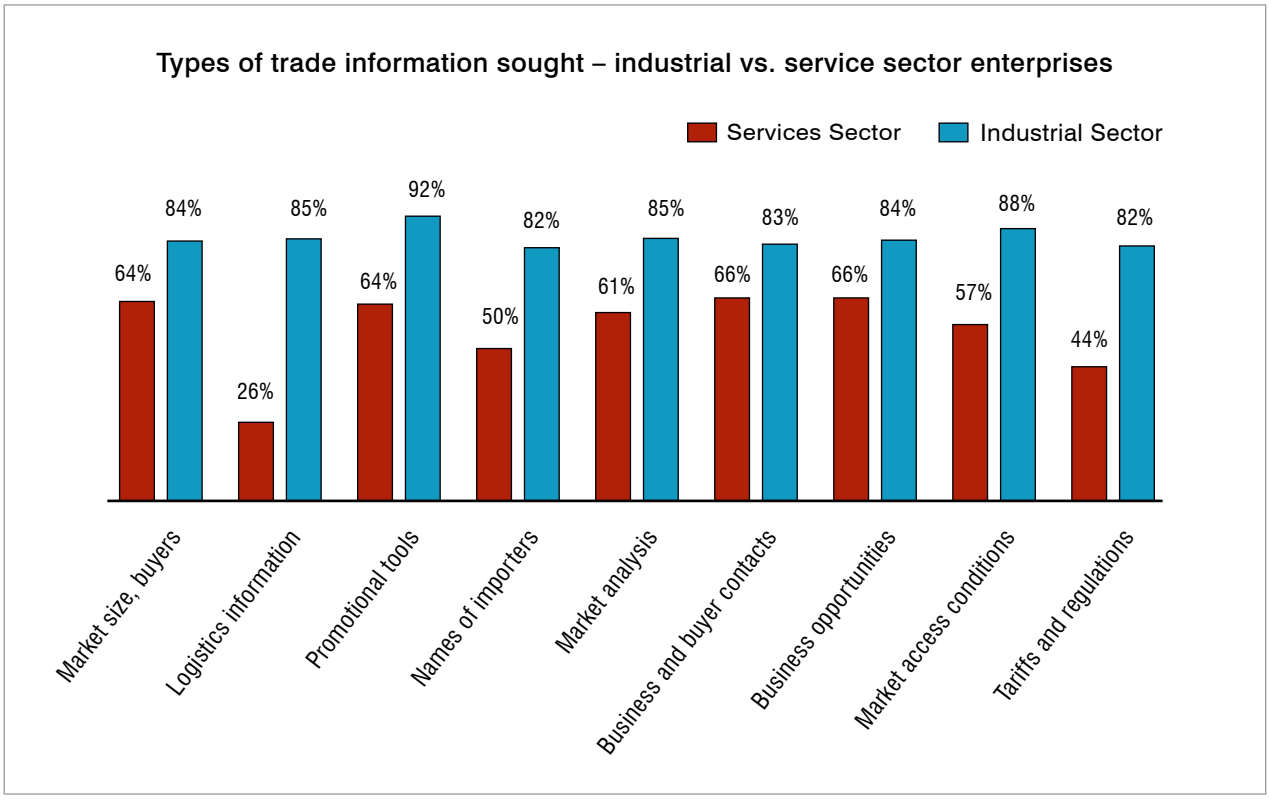
For nearly every information type, industrial sector enterprises indicated a high demand compared to service sector enterprises. There are prominent differences in priorities for the following categories – 'logistics information', 'names of importers/distributers', 'market access conditions', and 'tariffs and regulation'.

FEMALE-OWNED AND FAMILY-OWNED ENTERPRISES

Surveys were conducted with 54 female-owned and 275 family-owned companies.

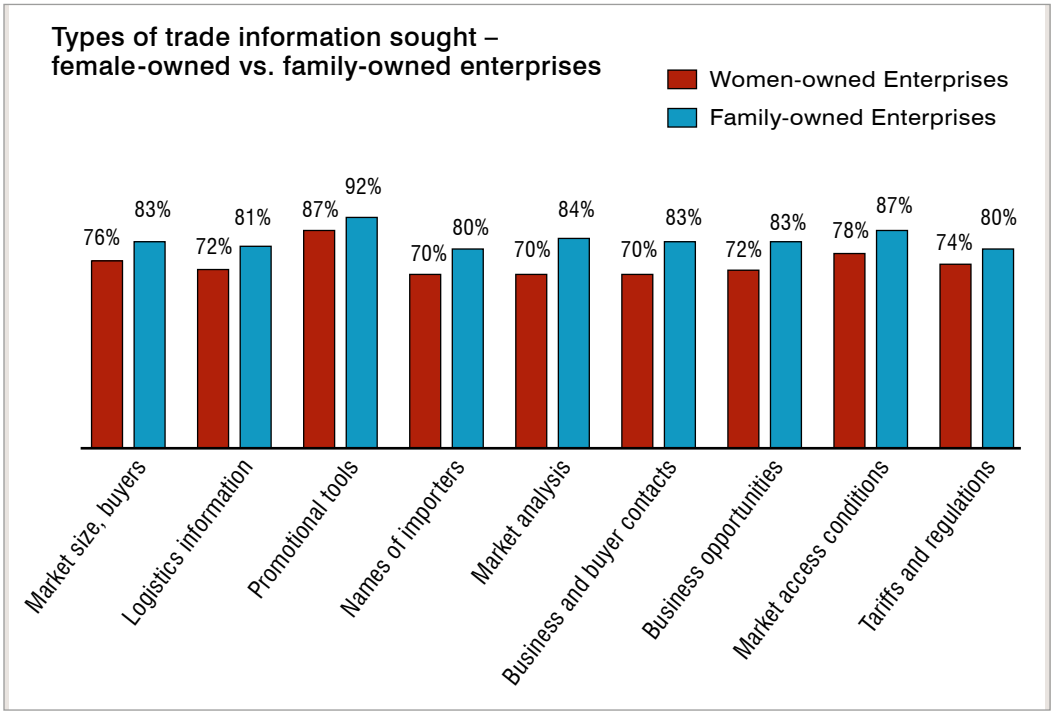
- For both female-owned and family-owned enterprises, the most important trade information type is information on promotional tools such as exhibitions, conferences, and publications, followed by logistics information.

Figure 1: *Trade information requirements for industrial and service sector enterprises in the State of Palestine*



Source: Jud, Veronica/International Trade Centre (2012). *Export Development in Occupied Palestinian Territory: Strengthening of PalTrade Information Services.* ITC.

Figure 2: *Trade information requirements for female-owned and family-owned enterprises in the State of Palestine*



Source: Jud, Veronica/International Trade Centre (2012). *Export Development in Occupied Palestinian Territory: Strengthening of PalTrade Information Services*. ITC.

SERVICE MAP

PALTRADE

Palestinian enterprises can access trade information from a number of trade support institutions but there is no efficient and coordinated information network to easily satisfy the needs of enterprises. The main focal point for information is the Palestinian Trade Centre (PalTrade). It is the national trade development organization and is supported by the membership of 327 private businesses. PalTrade is divided into three departments, of which two deal with trade information either indirectly or directly.

The first is the export promotion department. Involved in marketing and promotion activities, links with foreign offices and trade fairs allow it to help spread market information. The second department, and the one that deals more directly with trade information, is the export development and information department. It is tasked with capacity-building, training, technical assistance and sector development. It is also responsible for collecting, analysing, and disseminating trade information. The third department is the trade policy department, which caters to issues related to economic, tax, legal and regulatory environments.[2]

PalTrade provides demand-related trade intelligence through its website, conferences, workshops, and the publication of reports and studies. It also provides some basic information on its website about technical procedures, fees and taxes, standards, trade agreements, sectors and products. Moreover, it offers information about destination markets and provides assessments of potential product outlets. Information services – apart from elaborating market and product profiles – are rarely sought from the information service department. PalTrade's new strategy aims at expanding and structuring the development of this key function in order to expand its provision of services to the Palestinian business community.

MARKET INFORMATION INSTITUTIONS

The Ministry of National Economy (MoNE) offers key market data, including intelligence about trade agreements and basic information about trade, industry, and the economy. The Ministry is responsible for coordinating the overall collection, dissemination and analysis work of many of the different institutions involved in the trade information function.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

Source: © PalTrade

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) provides detailed data on imports and exports, and seeks to help businesses meet their needs for statistical data.

The Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industries and Agriculture (FPCCIA) delivers a wide array of trainings, market research, and trade information services. The individual chambers of commerce often have computer rooms where enterprises can access information or participate in specific trainings.

The Palestinian Shippers' Council (PSC) offers exceptionally detailed technical information about export procedures, licences, taxes, fees, requirements, insurance, and transport. Through collaborative efforts with PalTrade, the Shippers' Council is providing key information on trade procedures, routes, and challenges through the Palestinian Trade Facilitation Portal (PTFP). This portal needs to be updated.

The Palestine Standards Institution (PSI) provides information about national and international standards, as well as free counselling for exporters, importers, and investors. Information on market requirements is essential for exporters to enter and perform in a target market.

The Palestinian Businessmen Association (PBA) offers trade intelligence on demand from its library and provides access for its members to the Intra-Arab Trade Information System, Arab Trade Financing Program, and Trade Opportunities Monitoring System.

The Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS) is another institution that offers studies and workshops in the areas of trade intelligence. The Institute plays an important role as it conducts and disseminates legal and economic research on trade issues, such as assessing trade agreements and feasibility studies.

The Palestinian Federation of Industries (PFI) serves as a focal point for industrial enterprises seeking market and technical information. It is also mandated at the national level to formalise the procedure with GS1 for the establishment of Palestinian barcodes. It may thereafter become a focal point for providing information on this subject.

A number of other organizations provide trade information services to both businesses and investors, including Young Entrepreneurs Palestine, the Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency (PIPA), and the Business Women Forum (BWF).

PERFORMANCE

Despite the wide array of trade support institutions active in this area, the trade information cross-sector function has remained underdeveloped. When searching for specific data on destination markets, trends, and products, enterprises often find themselves reliant on international databanks or information provided by foreign institutions. Local information tends to be generic and not tailored to the specific needs of Palestinian enterprises, while detailed sector-specific data is lacking. Moreover, TSI information can be inaccessible due to high costs, poor awareness, and complicated distribution channels.

A more robust trade information landscape would provide enterprises with services that are tailored to the specific needs of Palestinian exporters and their target markets. These would enable firms to design their products in accordance with specific market requirements, including design and demand as well as regulations and standards. Improved market intelligence would also pave the way for improved marketing strategies and the eventual penetration of new markets.

THE INSTITUTIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Trade support institutions (TSIs) are institutions that have an interest in, and bearing on, the cross-sector's export development. Broadly, the trade support institutions providing important services to the Palestinian trade information cross-sector function can be categorized in the following areas:

- Policy support network
- Trade services network
- Business services network

Tables 1 to 3 identify the main TSIs whose service delivery affects the trade information framework in the State of Palestine. An assessment of the TSIs along four key dimensions – coordination, human capital, financial sustainability, and advocacy – is provided. The ranking (high/medium/low) for each TSI was selected in the context of service delivery of the TSI relative to trade information. In other words, the assessment was conducted based on stakeholders' evaluation of TSIs from the perspective of how well they serve trade information stakeholders.

POLICY SUPPORT NETWORK

These institutions represent ministries and competent authorities responsible for influencing or implementing policies at the national level.

Table 1: *Palestinian trade information policy support network*

Policy support network					
Name	Function/role	Coordination*	Human capital**	Financial sustainability***	Advocacy****
Ministry of National Economy (MoNE)	The Ministry of National Economy is responsible in the trade information function for: • Providing general information about trade agreements, trade laws and how to export; • Supplying exporters with necessary documents and with information about which documents are needed to export; • Publishing relevant trade-related studies that contain TI.	H	L	L	M
Ministry of Planning (MoPAD)	The responsibility of this ministry is to ensure that a realistic and Palestinian-owned development agenda is effectively implemented through a coordinated donor response working in tandem with well-managed and accountable Palestinian National Authority (PNA) institutions. For the trade information function it needs to ensure national strategies account for the institutions' contribution to the trade information network	M	L	L	L

* Coordination with other TSIs: measures the strength of this institution's linkages with other institutions as well as the beneficiaries of their services (in particular, the private sector) in terms of collaboration and information sharing.
** Human capital assessment: assesses the general level of capability of this institution's staff in terms of their training and responsiveness to sector stakeholders.
*** Financial resources assessment: assesses the financial resources/capacity available to the institution to provide service delivery in an efficient manner.
**** Advocacy: the efficacy of this institution's advocacy mechanisms, and how well/frequently this institution disseminates important information to the sector.

TRADE SERVICES NETWORK

These institutions or agencies provide a wide range of trade-related services to both government and enterprises. They support and promote sectors and are concerned with the delivery of trade and export solutions within a developing country.

Table 2: *Palestinian trade information trade services network*

Trade services network					
Name	Function/role	Coordination	Human capital	Financial sustainability	Advocacy
PalTrade	PalTrade is the trade promotion organization of the State of Palestine with the mandate to develop exports. PalTrade's mission in the trade information function is to: • Provide TI through their website, conferences, workshops, published reports and studies; • Disseminate basic information about laws, regulations and procedures free of charge on their website; • Deliver up-to-date information based on membership; • Provide information about target markets in countries of destination; • Contribute to the promotion of the State of Palestine's image and exports in local and global fairs.	H	M	M	M
Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)	PCBS is responsible within the trade information function for: • Collecting production, import and export data; • Managing statistics databases about Palestinian trade; • Providing requested data to institutions or enterprises requiring it for analyses; • Publishing general data about trade.	H	H	M	L
Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency (PIPA)	PIPA's role is to be proactive in promoting the State of Palestine's advantages to investors while keeping a close eye on legal developments and their impact on the private sector. In the trade information function, PIPA covers the following areas: • Provision of general TI relevant to investors such as information about trade agreements and business laws; • Maintaining a database of foreign direct investment inflows and outflows; • Maintaining a database about enterprises; • Maintaining a database of investment requirements per key sector.	H	H	M	L

Trade services network					
Name	Function/role	Coordination	Human capital	Financial sustainability	Advocacy
Palestine Standards Institution (PSI)	PSI is the sole body responsible for issuing Palestinian standards by providing accreditation for labs, granting the quality mark for products, and signing cooperation and mutual recognition agreements with other countries to facilitate trade. For the trade information function PSI must: • Disseminate information about national, international and country-specific standards as well as lists of quality management facilities; • Provide information to institutions and enterprises about how to ensure quality management and where to access specific support.	M	L	L	L
Palestinian Shippers' Council (PSC)	The Palestinian Shippers' Council addresses the urgent needs of Palestinian importers and exporters arising from the protracted conflict, and supports the PNA's reform and long-term trade development efforts. In the trade information function it must: • Provide detailed technical information about export procedures and mechanisms, as well as about licences, companies, taxes, fees, requirements, insurance and transport; • Provide information about legal issues related to trade; • Provide advice by help desk and hotline for members.	H	M	M	L
Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)	MAS is dedicated to producing sound and innovative policy research relevant to economic and social development in the State of Palestine, with the aim of assisting policy-makers and fostering public participation in the formulation of economic and social policies. MAS is important from the standpoint of TI as it conducts and disseminates legal and economic research on trade, including assessing trade agreements and conducting feasibility studies.	H	M	L	L

BUSINESS SERVICES NETWORK

These are associations, or major representatives, of commercial service providers used by exporters to effect international trade transactions.

Table 3: *Palestinian trade information business services network*

Business services network					
Name	Function/role	Coordination	Human capital	Financial sustainability	Advocacy
Palestinian Federation of Industries (PFI)	PFI facilitates industrial development as the basis for economic performance. Its role is to educate, advocate, and communicate the value of a developed, socially responsible and globally competitive industry. Specifically in the trade information function PFI: • Provides general TI, especially for investors; • Provides TI through counselling, workshops and exhibitions.	L	L	M	L
Chambers of Commerce (CoC)	The primary role of Palestinian chambers of commerce is to organise small and medium enterprises and businesses at the local level and assist them in improving their performance. From the standpoint of TI CoC: • Provide TI through publication of laws and policies; • Provide trainings containing TI; • Connect other TI providers with the local level.	M	M	M	M
Palestinian Businessmen Association (PBA)	PBA defends the interests of its members and the private sector at large in order to improve the business climate in the West Bank and Gaza. Similarly to FPCCIA, PBA is a lobbying and advocacy institution for the private sector. In the TI function, PBA provides access for members to the Intra-Arab Trade Information System, Arab Trade Financing Program and the Trade Opportunities Monitoring System.	L	L	L	L
Business Women Forum (BWF)	BWF provides beneficiaries with technical support such as packaging and labelling, production development, and quality assurance to reach the stage of stability of quality according to market needs. In terms of TI, BWF is active in two main areas: • Conducting meetings and awareness-raising workshops for members and beneficiaries to provide necessary information, rules, and regulations; • Strengthening networking between Palestinian businesswomen themselves and with their counterparts abroad.	L	L	L	L

Table 4: *Perception of Palestinian trade support institutions in the trade information cross-sector – influence vs. capability*

		Capacity of institution to respond to the sector's needs	
		Low	High
Level of influence on the sector	High	• PTFP	• PIPA • CoC • PalTrade
	Low	• PFI • PBA • BWF • PSI	• MoNE • MoPAD • PSC • MAS • PCBS

For all organizations, coordination with other TSIs is lacking. Several organizations find themselves in competition for funds and thus do not have incentives to coordinate with each other in the provision of TI services. There is more coordination between governmental organizations and in cases where the mandates differ considerably, such as between MAS and PCBS. Most of the more influential institutions such as PalTrade link to other organizations on their websites. However, even on this level some important organizations don't cooperate; for example, PalTrade and PSC do not link to each other's websites. Coordination that might enable the TSIs to provide TI to all levels of society in an effective matter, using each organization's specific strengths and position in society, remains a challenge.

There is some coordination connecting larger organizations to the local level, such as PalTrade or PSC seeking information from local chambers of commerce for their projects. However, cooperation mostly occurs in the sense of seeking information or services from each other, rather than integrating more than one organisation into a project according to their expertise.

The human capital assessment is low for most organizations. Generally speaking, none of the listed organizations have staff competent to offer comprehensive information upon request by e-mail or by phone. The MoNE trade information department in particular seems lacking in human capital. MoNE has a very small and understaffed export department with a high staff turnover, which results in a low level of TI competencies in the department, and TI as such is not given priority within the Ministry. Equally, even in organisations that have many highly qualified employees (e.g. PalTrade, PSC and MAS) and continue to invest in human capital, trade information is not perceived as being a priority.

Financial sustainability is another problem, because of the dependence of all organizations on donor-funded projects, which are generally of limited duration and do not allow much space for planning for post-project periods. Even key organizations such as PalTrade and MoNE are not able to continue implementing projects after funding has stopped; an example is the Palestinian Trade Facilitation Portal.

The advocacy dimension is especially weak for trade information services. According to our investigations a majority of exporters in Hebron, for instance, don't know that PalTrade and PSC exist, let alone that they provide trade information services. For most organizations advocacy has not so far been an explicitly pursued goal and therefore is limited to giving brief presentations about services offered on their websites or, in the case of the local chambers of commerce, advocating their services on an interpersonal level but neglecting the use of other media.

PERCEPTION OF PALESTINIAN TRADE SUPPORT INSTITUTIONS IN THE TRADE INFORMATION CROSS-SECTOR – INFLUENCE VS. CAPABILITY

As table 4 demonstrates, most organizations, especially those that are key institutions for the provision of trade information, show a low level of influence on the sector combined with a high (or considerably higher than the level of influence) capacity to respond to the sector's needs for TI. For a significant number of organizations both influence and capacity are low. Only PTFP has a high influence on the sector in providing comprehensive TI, while their financial capacity is so low that they are unable to work.

PIPA, CoC and PalTrade appear to be the only organizations with both a high level of influence on the TI sector and a capacity corresponding to this. Possible improvements should be especially focused on MoNE, MoPAD and PSC, with their potential for taking a greater role in the TI system through having either the capability to allocate resources and political attention to trade information

– as in the case of MoPAD and MoNE – or developing human capital in the case of PSC. The development of PSC in recent times is a good example of increasing capacity to influence the TI sector as a result of having given this issue more attention.

ANALYSIS OF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY

The analysis of ongoing development activity in the trade information function is relevant insofar as it serves to identify the main thrusts of the various development actors and their initiatives, while also identifying gaps and areas of neglect. The latter is especially important as identified gaps will be further analysed and will be addressed through specific interventions in the cross-sector's strategic plan of action (PoA).

The Palestinian trade information function is poorly addressed by international donors. The only international donor active in the Palestinian trade information function so far has been the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Development activity dedicated solely to the issue of trade information in Palestine has been extremely limited. The most relevant programme emphasizing the need to improve trade information suitable to the needs of Palestinian potential exporters and importers is an ongoing project by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People (PAPP), PalTrade and ITC, with CIDA acting as funding donor. Salient details of this project are captured in table 5.

COMPETITIVENESS CONSTRAINTS

This section identifies the most important constraints affecting the trade information function in the State of Palestine. Constraints are identified along two dimensions – institutional and enterprise levels. Institutional constraints refer to supply-side issues related to the service delivery of TSIs to enterprises specifically in terms of the capacities and resources available to the institutions for achieving effective service delivery. Enterprise constraints refer to demand-side issues related to infrastructure in terms of trade information.

Table 5: *Current development projects relating to the Palestinian trade information cross-sector function*

Project	Status	Funding agency / lead implementer	Expected areas of intervention
Export Development for Palestinian Businesses	2012-2016	• UNDP/PAPP, PalTrade and ITC • Funded by CIDA	• Increase trade-related opportunities for Palestinian businesses in sectors with export and employment-generating potential, with a particular focus on Palestinian micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs); • Unify TI from several sources in a common databank.

Box 3: Policy and institutional level issues in the Palestinian trade information cross-sector function

- Lack of availability of publicly available trade information is a significant challenge for MSMEs.
- High costs of market research reports, and inadequate knowledge on accessing free (and reliable) sources of TI, hinder MSMEs accessing information about target markets.
- There is a need to improve advocacy among trade information providers.
- Lack of policy focus on TI has affected development of the trade information cross-sector function.
- Limited development activity in the trade information cross-sector has contributed to its slow growth.
- There is a need to develop a one-stop shop that acts as a repository of reliable trade information.
- Weak coordination among TSIs leads to fragmented information and decreased potential to benefit from collaboration.
- There is a need to integrate Palestinian consulates and trade representations into the trade information function.
- There is a need to rationalize the mandates of TSIs involved in provision of TI services.
- Existing TI content and services are focused on MSMEs in Ramallah, resulting in neglect of other regions.
- Weak service delivery of chambers of commerce affects the quality of TI services available to enterprises.

LACK OF AVAILABILITY OF PUBLICLY AVAILABLE TRADE INFORMATION IS A SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGE FOR MSMES

Given that the Palestinian economy is primarily comprised of MSMEs (many of them family-owned) with small budgets on average, the relevance and importance of publicly available trade information is high, since these enterprises are largely unable to afford on-demand trade information.

Publicly available information is often unreliable and outdated, which leads to confusion for enterprises. Developing timely and reliable trade information requires a level of rigorous analysis and financial investment, so Palestinian TI providers are unable to provide trade information for free beyond a certain extent. This is an important factor contributing to the dearth of reliable trade information in the State of Palestine which is accessible by MSMEs.

HIGH COSTS OF MARKET RESEARCH REPORTS, AND INADEQUATE KNOWLEDGE ON ACCESSING FREE (AND RELIABLE) SOURCES OF TI, HINDER MSMES ACCESSING INFORMATION ABOUT TARGET MARKETS

One aspect of the due diligence involved in exploring new target markets involves seeking out sources of TI specific to the enterprise's sector and desired target markets. Market research reports such as those compiled by sources such as Euromonitor are financially prohibitive for the majority of Palestinian enterprises. Accompanying this challenge is the lack of systematic identification of free sources of trade information that enterprises can access. The sum effect is a vacuum of trade information, which no significant government or donor initiatives are addressing.

THERE IS A NEED TO IMPROVE ADVOCACY AMONG TRADE INFORMATION PROVIDERS

The weak awareness of trade information services among consumers exacerbates the short supply of such services. The lack of awareness of the network of trade information service providers in the State of Palestine is reflected in a survey that found that only 54% of industrial companies were aware of PalTrade's trade information services, 47% knew of its studies, and 56% were aware of its various publications, including its exporter's directory and trade magazines.[3] The majority of Palestinian enterprises interested in seeking trade information are used to acquiring information by other means such as face-to-face communication or from other types of media.

To the average consumer of such information, there is poor clarity about available sources of trade information. In this regard, trade information providers must improve advocacy levels to inform consumers about available services. Detailed and sector-specific information is mostly provided only to members of a TSI or on demand. Public information published on websites in the form of databases, export guides, studies and reports must be better advertised to stakeholders. Currently, TI providers do not advertise their services in an efficient manner.

Another reason for low visibility is the lack of online presence of TI providers. This partially stems from the lack of resources allocated for designing and updating websites within the organizational structure of TI providers. There may also be a need to develop change management initiatives to better inform management of the institutions on the benefits of developing a reliable online presence.

LACK OF POLICY FOCUS ON TI HAS AFFECTED DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRADE INFORMATION CROSS-SECTOR FUNCTION

Policy level gaps are hindering the development of the TI cross-sector function in the State of Palestine. The Palestinian NES is the first governmental initiative that explicitly addresses the issue of trade information. Until now, the cross-sector has not been addressed in any Palestinian governmental plan, legislation, studies or development programmes. There has been a lack of governmental leadership in terms of trade information.

Legislation lying in limbo –such as the chamber of commerce law– is delaying the development of the cross-sector in the State of Palestine. This law involves tenets that are expected to result in increased financial sustainability for the chambers and, in the process, benefit their members.

The lack of policy focus related to TI also contributes to the high levels of redundancy and overlaps between TI service providers. In the absence of clear-cut directions on distribution of responsibilities that can be integrated into the mandates of TSIs, multiple TSIs have started providing services without studying whether the services already exist and are provided by others.

Part of the reason for the lack of policy focus has been due to the large financial deficits being faced by the Palestinian National Authority, which have resulted in a drastic curtailment of initiatives and an inadequate focus on trade information. The other contributing factor is the relatively recent focus at governmental level on developing export competitiveness in the State of Palestine.

3. *Ibid.*

It is expected that, with this increase, specific references and interventions related to trade information will appear in national development plans.

LIMITED DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY IN THE TRADE INFORMATION CROSS-SECTOR HAS CONTRIBUTED TO ITS SLOW GROWTH

As indicated in the development activity section, there is limited donor driven development activity in the TI cross-sector. This has contributed to the relatively slow pace of development in the cross sector. This is driven in part by the low policy focus (discussed above) on the cross-sector. As the focus on TI by national policymakers grows, development activity (including that supported by donors) is also expected to grow.

THERE IS A NEED TO DEVELOP A ONE-STOP SHOP THAT ACTS AS A REPOSITORY OF RELIABLE TRADE INFORMATION

Enterprises wishing to access trade information must currently rely upon a variety of uncoordinated government agencies and institutions. Although much of the data that they need may in fact be available, it is difficult to track down and likely to be outdated. The fragmented nature of the TI infrastructure, in which trade information is spread across multiple sources that are disconnected and unsynchronized with each other, is a significant issue. As a result, companies are often left frustrated by their inability to navigate a complex web of institutional data sources.

There is an urgent need to develop a one-stop shop that is a comprehensive source of reliable trade information. This resource, which would collect and organize all relevant data in one location, would become the focal point for trade information. Such a solution would provide easy and quick access to data on market trends, access, preferences, regulations, logistics, import/export procedures, consumer trends in target markets, market opportunities, etc.

WEAK COORDINATION AMONG TSIS LEADS TO FRAGMENTED INFORMATION AND DECREASED POTENTIAL TO BENEFIT FROM COLLABORATION

Overall, the Palestinian TSN suffers from weak coordination among the TSIs, including among TSIs responsible for trade information. TSIs are generally unaware of the strengths and capacities of other TSIs and this leads to overlaps and redundancies.

THERE IS A NEED TO INTEGRATE PALESTINIAN CONSULATES AND TRADE REPRESENTATIONS INTO THE TRADE INFORMATION FUNCTION

Palestinian trade representations and consulates are in an ideal position to collect valuable market intelligence and trends in target markets in which they are present, and feed this information back to Palestinian TI providers for dissemination to enterprises. However, this feedback loop is weak. The feedback loop between Palestinian consulates/trade representations and national trade information providers –which exists but functions on an ad hoc basis– must be formalized. A network of TI providers will need to be linked with consulates/trade representations in order to assess capabilities and assign responsibilities.

Training will also play an important part in this regard. Officers at consulates and trade representations will need training in the kind of information needed and the sources to tap into, as well as how frequently to feed this information back to the State of Palestine.

THERE IS A NEED TO RATIONALIZE THE MANDATES OF TSIS INVOLVED IN PROVISION OF TI SERVICES

There is significant redundancy and overlap in terms of trade information services, which is partially due to the lack of policy focus on the TI cross-sector function in the State of Palestine. Given the resource-constrained environment in the State of Palestine, this redundancy is especially detrimental to service delivery. It is therefore important to examine the mandates of TSIs that provide TI services, and rationalize them to provide efficiency gains.

Such an exercise would necessarily involve mapping the flow of information between TSIs and the services that these institutions provide. This would serve as a basis for identifying overlaps and making informed recommendations.

EXISTING TI CONTENT AND SERVICES ARE FOCUSED ON MSMES IN RAMALLAH, RESULTING IN NEGLECT OF OTHER REGIONS

The trade information needs of urban and rural areas outside of Ramallah are largely neglected because providers focus on the TI needs of MSMEs in Ramallah. This happens chiefly because most TI providers are based in Ramallah, which leads to a natural focus on companies in the city. The majority of donors are also based in the Ramallah area, as a result of which they are much more connected with enterprises in the area.

WEAK SERVICE DELIVERY OF CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AFFECTS THE QUALITY OF TI SERVICES AVAILABLE TO ENTERPRISES

Chambers of commerce across the State of Palestine provide varying degrees of quality of service to enterprises, but mostly weak. One of the main reasons for this is the lack of financial resources available to chambers, because of which they are unable to offer quality services to enterprises at a sustainable pace.

A large percentage of the membership of the chambers of commerce is non-paying. While monitoring needs to be improved to ensure the collection of membership fees, the bigger issue is that of value. Members do not see the services offered by the chambers as valuable and are therefore hesitant to pay the membership fees. On the flip side, the chambers cannot provide high value services due to lack of financial resources. This is the catch-22 situation that the majority of chambers find themselves in, especially outside Ramallah.

A GENERAL LACK OF NETWORKING AND CROSS-POLLINATION OF INFORMATION BETWEEN ENTERPRISES ADDS TO THE TRADE INFORMATION DEFICIT IN THE STATE OF PALESTINE

The low levels of networking channels in the State of Palestine contribute to the paucity of trade information. For instance, chambers of commerce facilitate cross-pollination of information by organizing networking events. However, these events are infrequent and additional forums for exchanging information between Palestinian enterprises, as well as between Palestinian and international enterprises, are required.

TRADE INFORMATION NEEDS TO BE INTEGRATED INTO THE DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK OF PALESTINIAN ENTERPRISES THAT ARE SEEKING TO DEVELOP EXPORT COMPETITIVENESS

Traditionally, Palestinian enterprises have catered to the domestic market and consequently have not relied on TI as a means of generating competitiveness. Until now, enterprises have been largely unaware of the benefits of having reliable trade information and therefore have not proactively sought out sources. Even enterprises that seek this information are frequently unaware of the sources available. To a large extent, most Palestinian MSMEs lack even basic knowledge of target markets.

With the small size of –and high level of increasing competition in– the domestic market, trade information will play an important role in helping enterprises succeed in international markets. However, this change will require investment and due diligence to integrate TI into the decision-making frameworks of enterprises that are seeking to enter or expand in the export value chain.

A positive consequence of increased use of TI by enterprises will be to generate a 'pull' effect at a national level. Momentum will increase at the policy level, and energize TI providers to enhance existing –and develop new– products that are relevant for exporters.

Box 4: Enterprise level issues in the Palestinian trade information cross-sector function

- A general lack of networking and cross-pollination of information between enterprises adds to the trade information deficit in the State of Palestine.
- Trade information needs to be integrated into the decision-making framework of Palestinian enterprises that are seeking to develop export competitiveness.

THE ROADMAP

THE FUTURE PERSPECTIVE: THE WAY FORWARD

As discussed, trade information is a significant component of developing export competitiveness across the State of Palestine. Both the quality and availability of trade information are weak. Coordination among TSIs is weak and has led to redundancies in some places and gaps in service delivery in other areas. Advocacy at the institutional level is also in need of improvement. These and other constraints pose significant barriers to entry for exporters in the State of Palestine and will need to be addressed as soon as possible.

With that in mind, the following vision has been developed for the trade information cross-sector function:

> "Establish a trade information architecture, supported by the government, TSIs and the private sector, for easy and timely access to a wide range of trade information sources."

- The following will be key elements of the future state, exemplified through the above vision. These elements are all addressed through the cross-sector's strategic plan of action.
- A clearly visible network of TI providers, with improved coordination and collaboration and with limited gaps and redundancies.
- Detailed information about countries of destination – specific sectors, markets and products – in relation to Palestinian trade, provided through an easily accessible platform.
- Improved capacity at the enterprise level to leverage existing sources of trade information and synergize information sources to their advantage.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The three strategic objectives below have been identified in order to realize the overall vision for the sector.

1. Enhance coordination levels within the Palestinian trade information network in order to ensure that gaps and redundancies in service delivery are reduced. This objective will be realized through initiatives implemented along the following dimensions:
   - Institutionalize networking and coordination between institutions providing trade information;
   - Develop an efficient information collection system for use by TI providers;
   - Develop a centralized client interface for dissemination of TI;
   - Promote a membership-based network to provide specialized TI to enterprises;
   - Increased collaboration between sector unions and regional authorities;
   - Establish networking platforms to link exporters and clients, both within and outside the State of Palestine.

2. Improve the provision of more comprehensive, relevant and better quality trade information to exporting enterprises. This objective will be realized through initiatives implemented along the following dimensions:
   - Develop capability with TIs to develop/collect trade information content based on sector-specific specializations such as:
   - Trade finance options,
   - Trade logistics,
   - Country-specific import requirements related to quality (standards, regulations);
   - Increase awareness of, and accessibility to, global TI sources, especially in the case of publicly available (free) sources;
   - Increase access to relevant economic and trade statistics to allow enterprises to gain intelligence on country-specific trade trends;
   - Support participation of enterprises in international exhibitions and other networking events within and outside the State of Palestine;
   - Develop advisory services and related collateral (such as 'how-to' guides) for enterprises interested in exporting.

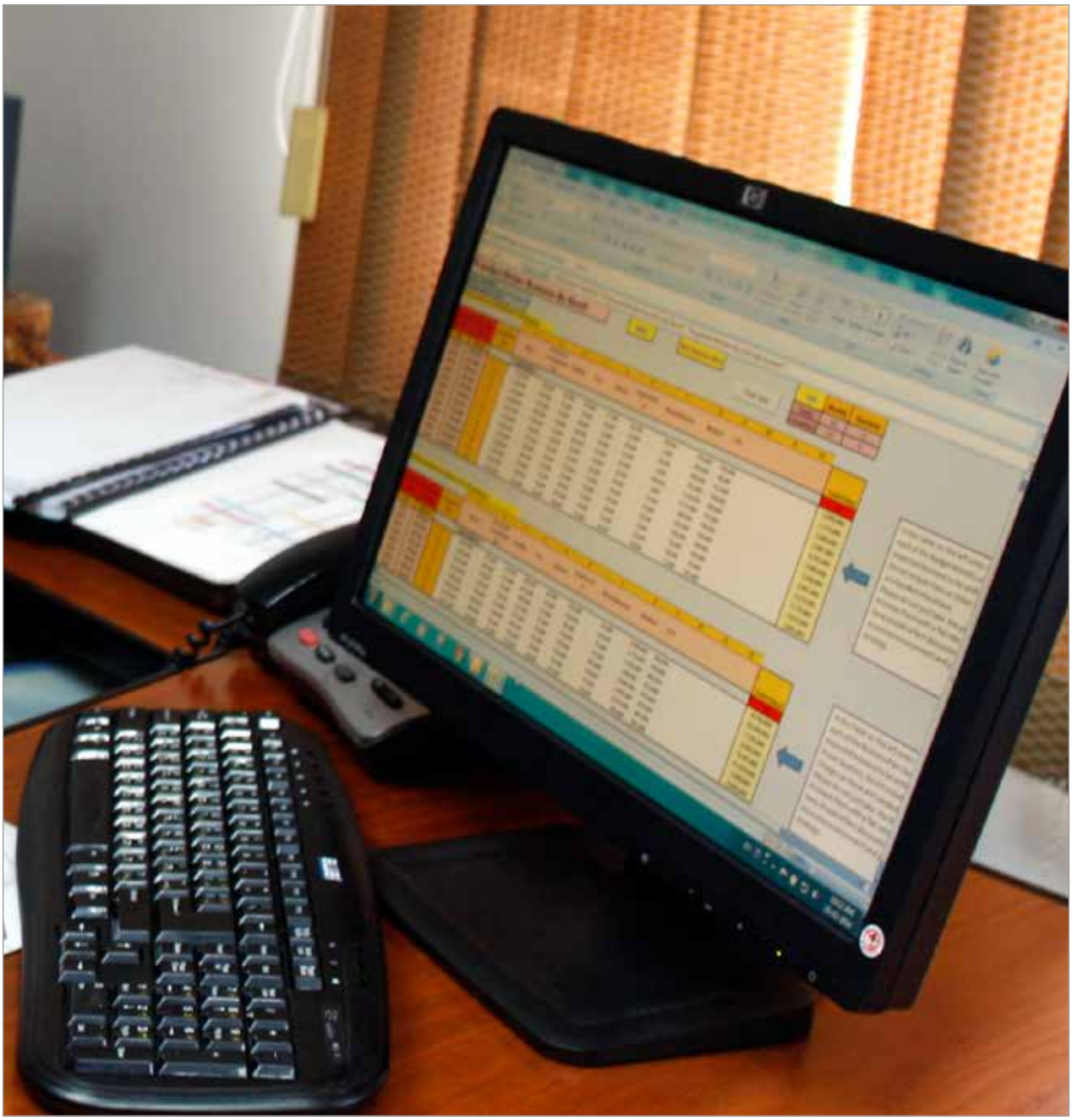
3. Build the capacity of enterprises to use trade information effectively in their export-related operations and decision-making. This objective will be realized through initiatives implemented along the following dimensions:
   - Reinforce the capacity of enterprises through training sessions and material focusing on the relevance, types and uses of TI;
   - Increase awareness among enterprises of the benefits of TI to trade competitiveness, and in the process promote the relevance of TI to export competitiveness development.

IMPORTANCE OF COORDINATED IMPLEMENTATION

The broad range of activities, together with the complex nature of integrated intervention, requires careful implementation that efficiently directs resources and monitors results at both the micro and macro levels. To this end, the Palestinian Export Council (PEC) will be established in order to facilitate the public-private partnership in

elaborating, coordinating, and implementing the National Export Strategy. In particular, PEC will be tasked with coordinating the implementation of activities in order to optimize the allocation of both resources and efforts across the wide spectrum of stakeholders. Within this framework, the implementation of the trade information strategy also falls within the purview of PEC.

Such efforts will involve directing donor, private, and public sector organizations towards the various NES priorities in order to avoid duplication and guarantee maximum impact. Responsibilities will also include monitoring the results of activities and outputs, while at the same time recommending policies that could enhance the realization of the strategic objectives. With a 360 degree view of progress, the organization will be best placed to manage funding and provide regular reports to donors and stakeholders. Moreover, PEC will play a key role in recommending revisions and updates to the strategy so that it continues to evolve in alignment with the State of Palestine's changing needs.



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THE STATE OF PALESTINE CROSS-SECTOR EXPORT STRATEGIES

PLAN OF ACTION

Strategic objective 1: Enhance coordination levels within the Palestinian trade information network to reduce gaps and redundancies in service delivery.									
Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=low 2=med 3=high	Beneficiaries	Target measures	Means of verification	Leading implementing partners	Supporting implementing partners	Existing or potential programmes	Estimated cost (US$)
1.1 Institutionalize networking and coordination between trade information institutions.	1.1.1 Establish an interim public-private committee on trade information composed of key TI institutions (PalTrade, MoNE, PSI, PCBS, chambers of commerce, PFI, PSC, PIPA, etc.) to define the operational structure of a TI network in the State of Palestine.	3	TSIs, network	Committee established, operational structure defined and written down.	Protocol of committee meetings, final document about structure.	PalTrade	PSI, PCBS, CoC, PFI, PSC		4 000 to 5 000
	1.1.2 Capture lessons learned from an established TI network on a specific theme (e.g. PTFP) to assess the technical and operational requirements of a larger scale network.	3	Network	Study about three cases of TI networks written with suggestions for technical and operational requirements.	Study paper	MAS	PalTrade, PSC, PFI, PTFP, Universities		15 000 to 20 000
	1.1.3 Based on recommendations of interim committee and lessons learned, formalize and operationalize a private-public TI network with dedicated resources pooled from the various public-private TI institutions (see relevant Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) below for specific components of network).	3	Network	Project document about formalization and operationalization, as well as pooled resources, written.	Network statutes, budgets, and three evaluations of network: after one, two and three years.	PalTrade	Other members of the network		10 000 to 15 000
	1.1.4 Ensure the basic structure of the network is effectively resourced, beyond the pooled resources of public and private TI institutions.	3	Network, exporters	At least one qualified person appointed within each TI institution who is solely responsible for the network.	Budget of the network; evaluation of TSI network after half a year and after one year, if basic structure is resourced sufficiently.	MoNE	Ministry of Finance, MoPAD		n.a.
	1.1.5 Ensure the TI network is supported by a regularly updated Internet-based system including a central database, specialized analytical services, Internet forum and newsletters.	3	Network, exporters	Central database established and updated on a weekly basis, Internet forum supported by two administrators, and newsletters sent out on a monthly basis.	Annual report by network.	PalTrade	MoNE, PSC, chambers of commerce, PIPA, other TSIs		20 000 to 30 000
	1.1.6 Ensure the network centralizes its resource mobilization for TI through the network and not as individual TSIs working in the network.	2	Network	All TI projects of the network conducted on behalf of the network.	Projects proposals of TSIs evaluated, if they can be placed on the level of the network.	MoNE	PalTrade, PSC		n.a.
1.2 Provide the TI network with an operational data collection system.	1.2.1 Establish a protocol, supported by an MoU between the different TI providers, for them to provide updated information to the centralized database of the TI network on a regular basis (i.e. weekly or monthly).	3	Network, exporters	Protocol established about all TSIs providing TI for centralized website on a monthly bases.	Protocol document; annual report by network.	MoNE	PalTrade, CoC, PSC		2 000 to 3 000
	1.2.2 Train officers in each TI provider on best practices in data collection and how to apply the TI protocol to keep the database updated.	2	TSIs, network	Three trainings for one representative of each TSI conducted.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	PalTrade	CoC, PSC	ITC – PalTrade project	3 000 to 5 000

Strategic objective 1: Enhance coordination levels within the Palestinian trade information network to reduce gaps and redundancies in service delivery.									
Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=low 2=med 3=high	Beneficiaries	Target measures	Means of verification	Leading implementing partners	Supporting implementing partners	Existing or potential programmes	Estimated cost (US$)
1.3 Ensure the network provides accurate and relevant data analysis reports.	1.3.1 Establish a protocol, supported by an MoU between the different TI providers, defining the specific analytical functions of each institution (e.g. PalTrade to provide market reports to network). In that protocol, each institution would be responsible for updating specific analytical components of the network database.	3	Network, exporters	Protocol annex about distribution of tasks drafted and published on central website.	Report of quarterly meeting with TSIs, to ensure that protocol is properly implemented.	MoNE	All TSIs		n.a.
	1.3.2 Train officers in each TI provider on best practices in data analysis and how to apply the TI protocol to update specific analytical components of the network database.	2	TSIs, network	Trainings for representatives of TSIs on half-yearly basis conducted.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	PalTrade	ITC	ITC – PalTrade project	5 000 to 7 000
1.4 Disseminate TI as a network through a centralized client interface.	1.4.1 Establish a protocol, supported by an MoU between the different TI providers, defining the specific requirements for institutions to support the dissemination of trade information through the network.	3	TSIs, network, exporters	Protocol annex about requirements for institutions drafted and published on central website.	Report of quarterly survey with TSIs if members stick to the protocol.	MoNE	PSC		2 000 to 4 000
	1.4.2 Based on lessons learned from PTFP and other multi-institutional websites, design new interfaces that will centralize all relevant trade information and tools to ease access to information for exporters. The new interface needs to respond to the needs of emerging, growing and current exporters.	3	Exporters	TI website for exporters designed and made operational.	Exporter satisfaction survey after one year Summary measures of traffic and utilisation of the exporter TI website.	PalTrade	All TSIs	ITC – PalTrade project	5 000 to 10 000
	1.4.3 Establish a long-term agreement with an Internet service provider to ensure the interface is highly referenced, user-friendly, updated, maintained, etc.	1	TSIs, exporters	Agreement of more than five years duration established.	Exporter satisfaction survey after one year.	PalTrade	All TSIs	ITC – PalTrade project	17 000 to 20 000
1.5 Promote the network to establish a membership to access specialized TI.	1.5.1 Once the network and its interface are established and functioning, launch a structured communication campaign to enterprises to promote the services of the network.	2	Enterprises	Campaign to promote the network to exporting enterprises conducted (direct marketing, newspapers, newsletters, websites).	Survey effectiveness report.	PalTrade	Media, MoNE, PIPA		5 000 to 7 000
	1.5.2 Ensure enterprises can have a member access page in order to access specific services (free or fee-based) aligned to their enterprise profile.	1	Enterprises	At least 60% of the members are satisfied.	Exporter satisfaction survey.	PalTrade	MoNE, CoC		5 000 to 8 000
	1.5.3 Improve connections between TI institutions and media such as newspapers, radio and TV through institutionalized regular press releases about general TI such as new laws and regulations, market opportunities, etc.	2	Enterprises, TSI, media	Media liaison officer of TI network appointed and operational.	Media survey.	Ministry of Information	MoNE, PalTrade, PCBS, network		4 000 to 5 000
	1.5.4 Conduct a study to analyse popular radio and TV programmes to evaluate if they can be used as entry points for the regular provision of trade information. If so, make use of these entry points.	2	Enterprises, TSI, media	Media communication study conducted, results disseminated in the TI network and media channels for TI selected.	Enterprise satisfaction survey.	Ministry of Information	PalTrade, MAS, State TV, universities		3 000 to 5 000

Strategic objective 1: Enhance coordination levels within the Palestinian trade information network to reduce gaps and redundancies in service delivery.									
Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=low 2=med 3=high	Beneficiaries	Target measures	Means of verification	Leading implementing partners	Supporting implementing partners	Existing or potential programmes	Estimated cost (US$)
1.6 Collaborate with sector unions and regional authorities for collection and dissemination of TI.	1.6.1 Organise annual MSME and TSI review meetings through sector unions, to discuss and agree on TI needs of sectors for their export development.	1	Sector unions, TSIs, exporters	Annual review meeting organised with representatives from all TSIs and sector unions.	Reports of annual meetings, participants' lists and meeting evaluation sheets.	CoC	Unions		2 000 to 4 000
	1.6.2 Organise trainings for trade unions (and other sector organisations such as chambers of commerce) aimed at improving their knowledge management capabilities.	1	Trade unions	Two trainings with trade unions conducted.	Reports of annual meetings, participants' lists and meeting evaluation sheets.	PalTrade	PSC, Unions		5 000 to 10 000
	1.6.3 Provide sector-specific trainings on entering the export value chain, the function of TI, the kinds of TI, and the forms in which it may be provided.	3	MSMEs	Quarterly trainings for specific sectors conducted.	Reports of annual meetings, participants' lists and meeting evaluation sheets.	PalTrade	Sector-specific unions		10 000 to 15 000
	1.6.4 Carry out a project with TSIs to decentralize structures and build up links with local governmental structures, such as municipalities, so as to provide a local representative who is in regular contact with MSMEs, can be approached personally for TI needs, and will acquire information about needs on a regular basis.	3	MSMEs	A local TI focal point appointed in every municipality to be in regular contacts with MSMEs according to needs and in at least monthly contact with TSI network.	Awareness survey with sector unions and MSMEs to see if they know about this representative and if he can provide information about the network.	FPCCIA	Other members of the network, sector-specific unions, local chambers of commerce, local municipalities		1 000 to 2 000
1.7 Strengthen collaboration with international networks and foreign representatives.	1.7.1 Strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to collect key trade information in target markets and disseminate it as part of the TI network.	3	MoFA	One trained TI focal point within MoFA appointed and operational.	Exporter satisfaction survey to TSIs about the quality of TI from MoFA.	MoFA	PalTrade		n.a.
	1.7.2 Incentivize the diaspora to collect and disseminate key trade information.	2	Exporters	For each target market, one correspondence with one diaspora representative through commercial attaché.	Yearly activity report of commercial attachés, exporter satisfaction surveys.	MoFA	PalTrade, PFI, FPCCIA,		n.a.
1.8 Build capacity in export departments and MoNE, PIPA and PSI.	1.8.1 Launch a short study to analyse the organisational structure of MoNE and capacity gaps in the export department.	3	Export departments	Gap analysis study undertaken and delivered.	Evaluation report after two years.	MAS	Ministry of Finance and MoPAD		10 000 to 15 000
	1.8.2 Based on the recommendations identified in the study, develop a capacity-building programme aimed at solving specific gaps.	2	Export departments	Capacity-building programme conducted with at least one representative of each department.	Report of evaluation with participants, exporter satisfaction surveys.	MAS	Ministry of Finance and MoPAD		5 000 to 6 000

Strategic objective 1: Enhance coordination levels within the Palestinian trade information network to reduce gaps and redundancies in service delivery.									
Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=low 2=med 3=high	Beneficiaries	Target measures	Means of verification	Leading implementing partners	Supporting implementing partners	Existing or potential programmes	Estimated cost (US$)
1.9 Identify the value of a functioning TI network for private sector development in National Development Strategies.	1.9.1 Integrate into the next National Development Plan (NDP) the role of TI in exports and economic development.	3	Policymakers, TSIs	A chapter about TI included in the NDP.	TI effectiveness evaluation report	MoPAD	TSIs		2 000 to 3 000
	1.9.2 Integrate specific policies to improve provision of TI into the National Development Plan.	2	Businesses, people interested in entering export value chain	Relevant pieces of legislation issued and integrated in the NDP.	Impact evaluation report.	MoPAD, MoNE	TSIs, MAS		5 000 to 7 000
1.10 Enable people to access initial and general TI quickly and free of charge through informal exchange by establishing an Internet platform for people involved in trade with the State of Palestine, both inside the country and abroad.	1.10.1 Establish an Internet forum for people involved in doing business with the State of Palestine and those interested in doing so. Locate this forum on the website of a central TI platform to be established. Link it to relevant organisations abroad (Palestinian embassies, NGOs related to the State of Palestine).	3	Enterprises, emerging exporters	At least 500 participants using this forum.	Satisfaction survey with forum participants.	PalTrade	Network, MoFA, chambers of commerce, sector-specific unions, cooperatives, PSC		3 000 to 5 000
	1.10.2 Give long-term support for such a forum through active administrators to help solve problems and answer questions so that there are high incentives to use this forum.	3	Enterprises, emerging exporters	Two well-qualified administrators for the forum appointed.	Satisfaction survey with forum participants	PalTrade	Network, MoFA, chambers of commerce, sector-specific unions, cooperatives, PSC		Included in the previous item
	1.10.3 Create a campaign to advertise this forum.	2	Enterprises, emerging exporters	Advertise once a month in all important local media.	Exporter awareness survey.	PalTrade	Network, local media		1 500 to 2 000
	1.10.4 Offer trainings for people interested in exporting to use this forum effectively.	2	Enterprises, emerging exporters	Quarterly trainings on the local level conducted.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	PalTrade	Network, chambers of commerce, sector – specific unions, PSC		3 000 to 6 000
	1.10.5 Approach Palestine-related organisations abroad to talk about linking their websites to this forum and advertising on it.	2	Enterprises, emerging exporters	At least one large diaspora organization in every country linked to the website and forum.	Relevant websites checked to see if they have been linked to forum.	PalTrade	International and foreign NGOs, MoFA		n.a.

Strategic objective 2: Improve the provision of more comprehensive, relevant and better quality trade information to exporting enterprises.									
Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=low 2=med 3=high	Beneficiaries	Target measures	Means of verification	Leading implementing partners	Supporting implementing partners	Existing programmes	Estimated cost (US$)
2.1 Ensure the quality and specialization of the trade information provided.	2.1.1 Establish specialized teams with domain and technical knowledge, and develop trade information content including, but not limited to: market research, statistics, business and investment opportunities, pricing information, certifications, packaging and product quality, good manufacturing and agricultural practices, logistics, product design, quality standards, branding, etc.	3	Enterprises	One team established for each area with experts from some of the TSIs and additional external experts according to the needs. Document about exact TI content agreed on to be provided regularly.	Document about TI to be provided and content of TI to be evaluated by an independent institution.	PalTrade	All TSIs		3 000 to 4 000
	2.1.2 Regularly monitor and assess the quality of the trade information provided to Palestinian enterprises.	3	Enterprises	Internal evaluation conducted on a quarterly basis. Survey conducted with enterprises about quality of TI on a half-yearly basis.	Evaluation reports.	Palestinian Society for Consumer Protection,	MoNE		2 000 to 4 000
	2.1.3 Provide, through a specialized third party and based on needs, additional training and support to specialized trade information teams to ensure alignment with quality requirements and global trends.	3	Enterprises	Conduct trainings with at least two representatives from each TSI on an annual basis.	Protocols from trainings, survey with participants.	External consultants	MoNE		10 000 to 20 000
2.2 Reference easily accessible global information better.	2.2.1 Identify which kind of global information is already available and link to it through a Palestinian website. Organize, according to Palestinian requirements, what needs to be translated, what needs to be published by media other than the Internet, and what needs to be brought to people/ businesses personally.	3	Businesses, especially MSMEs, TSIs	The different types of information identified and published on platform.	Document with categorization of global information. Regular evaluation of content of TI system to ensure inclusion of international information.	PalTrade	PalTrade, PSC, local CoC, network		1 500 to 3 000
	2.2.2 Organize workshops/trainings for TSI staff about information available at the international level, with a focus on information available for free or for a low price.	3	TSIs	Organize two trainings for two representatives of each TSI, one carried out in the process of building up the trade information system and one half a year later.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	MAS	PalTrade		10 000 to 15 000
	2.2.3 Create a TI newsletter to be sent to all TSIs on a regular basis to inform them about information available as well as changes to and costs of this information.	2	TSIs	Comprehensive newsletter sent out on a quarterly basis.	Effectiveness survey.	MAS	PalTrade, PSC		7 000 to 10 000

Strategic objective 2: Improve the provision of more comprehensive, relevant and better quality trade information to exporting enterprises.									
Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=low 2=med 3=high	Beneficiaries	Target measures	Means of verification	Leading implementing partners	Supporting implementing partners	Existing programmes	Estimated cost (US$)
2.3. Make available free 'public good' information relating to market access and entry, international regulatory frameworks and the multilateral trading system, regional trade agreements, etc. in an easily accessible, user-friendly manner for free.	2.3.1 Provide general information about global markets and priority export sectors of the State of Palestine through the TI network.	3	Exporters and people interested in exporting	Information on TI Internet platform updated according to changes happening and published in local newspapers on a quarterly basis	Business awareness survey.	PalTrade	CoC, PFI		3 000 to 5 000
	2.3.2 Provide general information on quality requirements for international markets.	3	Exporters and people interested in exporting	Information on TI Internet platform updated according to changes happening and published in local newspapers on a quarterly basis	Business awareness survey.	PSI	MoNE		3 000 to 5 000
	2.3.3 Provide general information on trade facilitation and logistics.	3	Exporters and people interested in exporting	Information on TI Internet platform updated according to changes happening and published in local newspapers on a quarterly basis	Business awareness survey	PSC	MoNE		3 000 to 5 000
	2.3.4 Provide information about trade agreements and their use for export competitiveness.	3	Exporters and people interested in exporting	Information on TI Internet platform updated according to changes happening and published in local newspapers on a quarterly basis	Business awareness survey.	MoNE	PalTrade		3 000 to 5 000
2.4 Increase access to relevant, quality economic and trade statistics of the State of Palestine.	2.4.1 Provide a special tool to PCBS for their users to extract specific data themselves from the pool of data available from PCBS.	3	Exporters	The tools is used by 60% of business people.	Satisfaction survey.	PCBS	MoNE		20 000 to 40 000
	2.4.2 Provide regular reports from PCBS providing country-specific TI about important trading partners.	1	TSIs, exporters	One quarterly profile report about TI is provided.	Business awareness survey.	PCBS	MoNE		10 000 to 15 000
	2.4.3 Institutionalize comparing of data with one other country and international organisation (mirror exercise).	2	TSIs, network, exporters	Person in charge at PCBS appointed and mirror exercise conducted	Analysis of quality of papers of mirror exercise in the context of general regular evaluation of the TI system.	MAS	PCBS		7 000 to 10 000
2.5 Provide easy access to specialized market research.	2.5.1 Conduct basic training sessions about how to use country-specific trade information such as effective reading of socioeconomic statistics, how to use market pointers/ factsheets, and how to carry out research about a specific a market (what to look for, where to find information).	3	Enterprises, specialised industrial associations	Trainings conducted locally on a quarterly basis.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	PalTrade	MAS, PCBS, specialised industrial associations		12 000 to 15 000
	2.5.2 Conduct a study on which international market reports are best for the needs of Palestinian traders related to their costs.	2	Emerging exporters	One detailed, high quality study conducted.	Review of study by two experts from TSIs.	MAS	PalTrade, MoNE		7 000 to 10 000

Strategic objective 2: Improve the provision of more comprehensive, relevant and better quality trade information to exporting enterprises.									
Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=low 2=med 3=high	Beneficiaries	Target measures	Means of verification	Leading implementing partners	Supporting implementing partners	Existing programmes	Estimated cost (US$)
2.6 Provide comprehensive information about available financial mechanisms, risks and requirements for exporting.	2.6.1 Offer workshops on the financial costs, risks and possible profits of investing in export development.	2	Enterprises, access to finance operators	Trainings conducted locally on a quarterly basis.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	Association of Banks in Palestine	TI network, CoC, PFI		6 000 to 10 000
	2.6.2 Carry out research to gather examples of companies that have invested in export development, with details about investments and outcomes (provide this via a central trade information system).	3	Emerging exporters	Detailed research conducted about three larger and three smaller companies of this type.	Sample satisfaction survey with some companies.	MAS	PalTrade, PSC, CoC		10 000 to 12 000
	2.6.3 Disseminate on the network a guide to financial instruments available for export development (for more information, see link to the access to finance strategy).	2	Enterprises	Guide updated on an annual basis, or more often in the case of important changes.	Sample satisfaction survey with some companies.	Association of Banks in Palestine	Network, PalTrade, PSC, CoC, Network		3 000 to 5 000
2.7 Provide comprehensive information about standards, regulations and requirements of targeted markets.	2.7.1 Develop a complete list of current Palestinian standards.	3	Enterprises	List updated on an annual basis or more often in the case of important changes.	Sample satisfaction survey with some companies.	PFI	Industry union		1 500 to 3 000
	2.7.2 Establish an enquiry point through which international standards are conveyed to technical committees in charge of creating Palestinian standards, where applicable. » Create a framework (project plan for establishing enquiry point); » Publicize and provide access to global standards to local businesses through a website.	1	Enterprises	Enquiry point established; annual list of priority international standards to be adopted by the State of Palestine established.	Website accessible and operational; annual list of priority international standards to be adopted by the State of Palestine.	PFI	Industry union		
	2.7.3 Improve current technical committees and create new ones in the fields of their specialties, structured similarly to the way products and services are structured.	2	Businesses	At least three committees are reviewed or created a year.	Statutes, review reports and recommendations.	PFI	Industry union		
	2.7.4 Provide sector-specific information about new opportunities, new regulations and market trends by newsletters (according to a study conducted on which of this information is requested to be provided by newsletter).	3	Emerging exporters	Report published on a quarterly basis.	Review report through internal quality control of TI network.	PalTrade	Network, MoNE, MAS		8 000 to 10 000
	2.7.5 Disseminate the most important information through other media such as local radio and newspapers, advertising on a central database.	2	Emerging exporters	Information provided on a monthly basis in all local media.	Enterprise survey	PalTrade	Network, MoNE, Media		5 000 to 6 000
	2.7.6 State clearly which information cannot be provided and give an overview of the possibility and costs of acquiring it.	2	Emerging exporters	Information provided on a monthly basis in all local media.	Review list through internal quality control of TI network.	PalTrade	Network, MoNE		N/A

Strategic objective 2: Improve the provision of more comprehensive, relevant and better quality trade information to exporting enterprises.									
Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=low 2=med 3=high	Beneficiaries	Target measures	Means of verification	Leading implementing partners	Supporting implementing partners	Existing programmes	Estimated cost (US$)
2.8 Provide information related to quality management, global norms and voluntary standards.	2.8.1 Enhance the current website (under PalTrade) to be a single source of reference for any existing or potential exporter to access information about export regulations, the process, links to quality requirements, certification, and so on. Add the following features: » Enable the website to provide Export Basics training; » Enable easy access and links to export-related material; » Provide access to quality requirements when accessing global markets.	3	Enterprises	Website updated on a monthly basis in the framework of 'central database project' by network	Internal quality control of network, external evaluation on an annual basis.	PSI	TI Network: PalTrade, PSC, CoC, PFI		8 000 to 15 000
	2.8.2 Increase exposure of local sales people to global markets: » Design and provide export training tailored to their specific needs; » Provide easy access to quality requirements for intended markets.	2	MSMEs	Export training provided locally on a quarterly basis.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists, business awareness survey.	PSI	TI Network: PalTrade, PSC, CoC, PFI		8 000 to 10 000
	2.8.3 Use the TI network to conduct trainings on quality management for export development (for more information, see link to the quality management strategy).	2	Enterprises, quality management institutions	Trainings on quality management provide locally on a yearly basis.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	PSI	TI Network: PalTrade, PSC, CoC, PFI		6 000 to 8 000
2.9 Provide information related to trade facilitation and logistics procedures.	2.9.1 Use the TI network to conduct trainings on trade facilitation for export development (for more information, see link to trade facilitation and logistics strategy).	2	Enterprises	Trainings conducted locally on annually basis.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	TI Network	MoNE, PalTrade		10 000 to 20 000
2.10 Provide information on trade promotion for Palestinian enterprises.	2.10.1 Create member-only promotion services: virtual exhibition of products, trade-related SMS news alerts.	2	Exporters who are members in network	Network to provide at least two qualified people just for members' promotion services.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	TI Network	MoNE, PalTrade		10 000 to 15 000
	2.10.2 List foreign business opportunities and provide the list free for members, fee-based for non-members.	2	Exporters	Foreign business opportunities updated on a bi-annual basis.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	TI Network	MoNE, PalTrade		4 000 to 7 000
	2.10.3 Specialized training on promotion, branding and labelling through the TI network.	2	Exporters	Training conducted regionally on a half-year basis.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	PSC	PalTrade		7 000 to 10 000

Strategic objective 2: Improve the provision of more comprehensive, relevant and better quality trade information to exporting enterprises.									
Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=low 2=med 3=high	Beneficiaries	Target measures	Means of verification	Leading implementing partners	Supporting implementing partners	Existing programmes	Estimated cost (US$)
2.11 Use trade information skills for better trade promotion of Palestinian enterprises.	2.11.1 Support Palestinian business people's participation in international exhibitions financially, through development of a loan/grants programme specifically designed for promising exports.	2	Enterprises	Provide a combination of loans and grants for 20-30 business people annually to visit exhibitions.	Business survey.	PalTrade, local chambers of commerce	Network, PalTrade, local chambers of commerce		5 000 to 7 000
	2.11.2 Offer trainings for Palestinian business people to present themselves at international exhibitions and establish and maintain business relationships.	2	Enterprises	Training conducted regionally (north/Ramallah/south) on an annual basis.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	Local chambers of commerce	Network, PalTrade		4 000 to 8 000
2.12 Provide assistance to enterprises to develop export development plans.	2.12.1 Combine the knowledge and experience of institutions in the TI network to write a guide for Palestinian enterprises on how to develop an export development plan.	2	Enterprises	Guide updated on an annual basis and distributed at municipality level.	Review of guide within TI network.	PalTrade	TI network, FPCCIA, PFI		3 000 to 6 000
	2.12.2 Establish an online tool for enterprises to assess their export readiness based on their capacity level, and offer a number of free and fee-based services.	2	Enterprises	Design the tool in a simple way so that 60% of business people have the skills to use it.	Allow a sample of business people to try out the tool and comment on its usefulness.	PalTrade	TI network, FPCCIA, PFI		4 000 to 8 000
	2.12.3 Publish the 'how to develop an export development plan' guide on the TI network.	3	Enterprises	Guide updated on an annual basis.	Add an online tool on the same page for users to comment on the usefulness of guide online by answering three questions on it.	PalTrade	MoNE		2 000 to 4 000
	2.12.4 Conduct workshops for businesses at the local level about developing an export development plan.	2	Enterprises	Carry out workshops locally on an annual basis.	Participants' evaluation sheets and attendance lists.	Chambers of commerce	PalTrade		7 000 to 10 000
2.13 Determine specific strengths of different TSIs, so that work can be allocated more effectively.	2.13.1 Conduct a study about the performance of TSIs in different fields	2	TSIs, businesses, people interested in entering the export value chain	Detailed, high quality study conducted to serve as a basis for allocation of responsibilities.	Review study by expert from MoNE (if conducted by a research institute).	MoNE	MAS, other research centres		10 000 to 12 000
	2.13.2 Use the results of studies to discuss with TSIs their strengths, profile and main focus related to TI, so that they can concentrate on a limited field in depth and with quality.	2	TSIs, businesses, people interested in entering the export value chain	Conduct three meetings with delegates from TSIs to decide about allocation and limitation of focus of work. Write a paper about agreement.	Protocol or report about workshop, paper about agreement.	MoNE	Network, PalTrade, PSC, local chambers of commerce		1 500 to 3 000

Strategic objective 3: Build the capacity of enterprises to use trade information effectively in their export-related operations and decision-making.									
Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=low 2=med 3=high	Beneficiaries	Target measures	Means of verification	Leading implementing partners	Supporting implementing partners	Existing programmes	Estimated cost (US$)
3.1 Reinforce the capacity of enterprises to use trade information effectively.	3.1.1 Develop pedagogical materials on using trade information for export development, to be disseminated to enterprises.	2	Enterprises	Offer this material to at least 60% of enterprises which are interested in export.	Conduct survey with enterprises, if they have been offered material, on its benefits.	PalTrade	CoC		2 000 to 5 000
	3.1.2 Train trainers on direct user capacity-building for collecting, analysing and using trade information.	3	Enterprises	Train members of TSIs as trainers, especially at local level, such as local chambers of commerce. Conduct training on an annual basis.	Protocol of trainings, conduct survey with participants.	MAS	PalTrade		10 000 to 15 000
	3.1.3 Conduct regular trainings for enterprises on 'how to use trade information for business development'.	3	Enterprises	Train members of TSIs as trainers, especially at local level, such as local chambers of commerce. Conduct training on an annual basis.	Protocol of trainings, conduct survey with participants.	MAS	PalTrade		10 000 to 15 000
3.2 Promote TI service offerings to end users.	3.2.1 Compile a short guide to trade information in the State of Palestine and its value for enterprise development.	2	Enterprises, TSIs, universities	Guide is compiled and disseminated.	Review quality control of TI network.	MoNE	TI Network: PalTrade, CoC, PFI, etc.		7 000 to 10 000
	3.2.2 Provide detailed information in electronic and print formats concerning trade information available in the State of Palestine and its usefulness.	2	Enterprises, TSIs, universities	Information published on central database, booklet disseminated to at least 60% of enterprises interested in exporting.	Survey with enterprises, if they know about this information and if reading it encourages them to seek further TI.	MoNE	TI Network: PalTrade, CoC, PFI, etc.		2 000 to 4 000
3.3 Strengthen accountability of TSIs to their clients related to providing trade information.	3.3.1 Make transparency a main criteria for allocating funds (including publication about funds received, objectives of each project, beneficiaries, and avenues for complaint on the Internet).	2	TSIs, businesses, people interested in entering export value chain	Transparency-based system for allocation.	Evaluation by independent institute.	MoPAD	MoNE		5 000 to 10 000
	3.3.2 Allow TSIs to contribute financially to projects using a portion of membership fees (as much as possible), so that members feel motivated to control how their fees have been used.	2	TSIs, businesses, people interested in entering export value chain	Favour TSIs in the distribution of funds that contribute to the financing of projects. Slowly raise the expected percentage of contribution from 10% to 40%.	Evaluation by independent institute.	Donors	MoNE		5 000 to 10 000
	3.3.3 Conduct a project with members of the TI network that aims to embed the representation of all regions into all fields of their services. Aim to agree to adoption of this aspect into their guidelines and agree on quotas for workshops and other activities to be carried out in areas other than the city of Ramallah.	3	Businesses and people interested in entering the export value chain from outside Ramallah	Carry out three workshops with representative of all TSIs. Write down agreement on representation of regions.	Protocol of workshops, agreement to be reviewed through internal quality control of network.	MoPAD, donors	Network		6 000 to 9 000

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