



Facilitating Export and Economic Growth

The Role of PalTrade



By Mohammed Al Ram'ah

Palestine is unique among the countries of the world since it has no real control over its borders or trade crossing points. As a result, it requires a truly national effort on the part of various public- and private-sector organizations to account for our foreign trade levels. In order to avoid confusion, the Palestine Trade Center – PalTrade acts as the export promotion and development organization in Palestine and is the source and window on information concerning Palestine's international trade.

PalTrade was established in 1998 as a nonprofit, membership-based organization with a national mandate, given by the Palestinian government in 2005, to lead the development of Palestinian exports as a driving force for sustainable national economic growth. Over the last 18 years PalTrade has worked with Palestinian exporters, national partner networks, international donor agencies, and the international export support network to create a positive impact on Palestinian export performance. PalTrade has more than 200 members that vary in size from small to large companies, representing various sectors that include the industrial, agricultural, and services sectors, and cover East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and Gaza. PalTrade is a member of the board of the Arab Union for International Exhibitions and Conferences (AUIEC) and the Arab Trade Supporting Institutions. PalTrade's role as the secretariat of the Palestinian Export Council (PEC), which aims to facilitate public/private partnership in the elaboration, coordination, and monitoring of the Palestinian National Export Strategy (NES), has provided a unique opportunity for moving the export development agenda significantly to the forefront. PalTrade is a leading organization in the West Bank and Gaza on gender and environmental issues, with



dedicated focal points appointed for each.

Our extensive membership base covers all the export sectors and products in Palestine. Through our network of regional and international trade-support institutions from both the public and private sectors, PalTrade has built an impressive collective to draw from in order to serve interested parties in their search for suitable exports markets for their products and services. With our ultimate goal being to lead the development and sustainable increase of Palestinian exports as a driving force for sustainable national economic growth, PalTrade focuses on four strategic goals.

Strategic goal 1 - To work toward and contribute to an enabling environment for exporters at the national and international levels to increase exports to new and existing markets

Strategic goal 2 - To grow the number and export capability of Palestinian exporting businesses

Strategic goal 3 - To convert international market opportunities into sustainable Palestinian exports

Strategic goal 4 - To build the corporate and service capacities of PalTrade to meet businesses' needs

We always operate in accordance with our set of values that guarantees integrity, quality, and equality, and our



door is always open to all, be they companies, small producers, public institutions, potential exporters, or even students engaged in university research. We have developed a complete set of services, most of which are available for free to our members and clients, regardless of their origins or nationality.

The PalTrade Service Delivery Model will continue to evolve in order to ensure a more customer-oriented and direct relationship with Palestinian exporters. This will be achieved through the development of service-level programs appropriate for each level of exporter. Over time, it is PalTrade's goal to develop an account-management approach that ensures that the businesses with the largest potential to export, or the potential to increase significantly their level of exports, are supported appropriately, and ideally progress through each level of export support both in terms



PalTrade participating in trade exhibitions. Photos courtesy of PalTrade.

of the creation of new exporters and an increase in those businesses actively engaged in export.

The PalTrade Service Portfolio will be broadly split into five service levels in order to enable such results: 1) Export Awareness Services; 2) New Exporter Services; 3) Exporter Competitiveness; 4) Export and Market-Development Services; and 5) Palestinian Export Ambassadors. Each of these service levels will comprise a combination of existing services that PalTrade currently provides, such as market studies, business-to-business meetings, and trade missions, together with new or improved services that will be developed around market intelligence and the trade-information portal, export business planning support, and the development of more proactive diaspora links and Palestinian branding.

The intention is that businesses would progress through the service levels as they develop their export ambition

and potential, that services would be targeted at the right time and right level for each business customer; and that the outputs of each service level would be fully assessed and measured through the results-based management process. Services at each level would be a mix of contracted services, outsourced services, and in-house delivery, as PalTrade capacity is built up.

Export Awareness Services will primarily be delivered in partnership with national partners and the wider trade-support network, ensuring that businesses in all sectors of the economy have more awareness and access to PalTrade export services, and are encouraged to consider the export opportunity.

New Exporter Services will include both identifying those businesses with the potential to export through export-readiness assessments, particularly in key product sectors, and developing their export approach and planning,

ultimately assisting them to achieve their first sales in export markets.

Exporter Competitiveness will target those businesses currently exporting but who require assistance to develop new export markets, or aspects of their export delivery and knowledge – ultimately building their capacity as exporters.

Export and Market-Development Services will provide support and services for businesses in terms of export-promotion programs, trade missions, and business-to-business meetings, and will target businesses that have built up their export capability and can demonstrate clear export market opportunities.

Palestinian Export Ambassadors is a new development area that seeks to build strong links with the diaspora. It reflects the export experience and knowledge of many PalTrade founder-member businesses and how they can support Palestine's export

performance, as well as benefit from and promote the brand and image of Palestine in export markets.

We encourage everyone who is looking to gain more information about Palestinian trade, or any company that is thinking of exploring its export potential by participating in the many international trade exhibitions we visit annually or securing new potential buyers via our B2B meetings, or even looking to build their capacity and become full-fledged exporters through participating in our many project to contact us immediately. We assure you that we will provide you with all the tools and means possible for your venture and ours to succeed together. You can always reach us through our main e-mail: info@paltrade.org; or at tradeinfo@paltrade.org for trade-related inquiries.

Mohammed Al Ram'ah is the Market Intelligence Officer at PalTrade.