



**Palestinian Information Technology Association of
Companies - PITA**

AND

The Palestinian Market Development Programme - (PMDP)

Bridges (Jossor) Initiative

Request for Proposals

January 2016

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1. Background

The Palestinian Information Technology Association of Companies represents more than 150 major ICT companies in Palestine's emerging technology and startup ecosystem. PITA has become the driving force in advancing the ICT sector's interests, and the leading information source about this sector in Palestine. Based in Ramallah, PITA was founded in 1999 by a group of Palestinian entrepreneurs with the vision of creating a non-profit organization to advance the interests and positive societal impact of Palestine's Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector.

The Palestinian Market Development Programme (PMDP) is funded by UK Department for International Development (DFID) and European Union (EU) in-cooperation with the Ministry of National Economy and implemented by DAI Europe over a period of five years in the oPt. The programme has been designed to improve market systems and improve the competitiveness of the Palestinian private sector. PMDP will work on strengthening trade and investment linkages as well as linkages with the Palestinian Diaspora to play an active role in economic development in the oPts.

The (PMDP) has conducted a study on the "Quality of Engineers¹ for Multinational Enterprises (MNE's)" in July 2015, which identified many constraints and one of them is that, there are *"No sustainable academia partnership with the industry. The rationale for this idea is not yet fully appreciated by the academia. Additionally there is no central point to all universities to develop a strategy for such partnership especially with the absence of the leadership and governmental role."* As a general direction, PMDP believe that the critical areas in the market system that requires addressing include: 1) Improving the information development, cooperation and dissemination between the supply (Universities) and demand side (Local ICT companies) on skills needs, and 2) Work with stakeholders on specialized training through various initiatives.

Therefore, PITA and PMDP have identified the linkage between Palestinian Universities and the ICT sector as a key weakness, which, if tackled, would enhance the competitiveness of human capital in the sector. In order to facilitate a more effective link, PITA and PMDP wish to launch a pilot initiative titled the '**Bridges (Josoor) Initiative.**'

The objective of Bridges/Josoor is to bring PITA member companies and Universities to engage in joint, commercially oriented projects in innovative IT product development, projects, and research. Jossor/Bridges is a highly competitive programme aimed at forward-looking companies and universities that are keen to raise the standard of cooperation between the IT sector and universities. Amongst others, the programme will benefit companies by providing a platform for accessing significant knowledge capital and talent housed at Palestinian universities. For Universities, the programme offers an avenue for syncing with IT sector challenges and needs, and channeling this learning into more effective, applied IT education.

¹ <http://www.pmdp.ps/page.php?id=107c1y67521Y107c1>

2. Bridges: Goals and Mission

To support scientific excellence and technological innovation through the investment of research in technically economic commercial feasible ideas and priorities that may contribute to building a strong and innovative national IT industry.

The programme has three main goals:

- Stimulate technological innovation and product development;
- Support commercialization of ideas that may have been nurtured at universities, and increase private-sector commercialization of innovations derived from the innovative research and development at University level
- Link the IT education and research in Universities with the private sector; and
- Improve the professors knowledge of the market issues and trends that will be reflected on the students

3. Eligibility Criteria

The Bridges programme is open to member companies of PITA² and faculty from participating local universities. Companies and faculty are invited to submit joint proposals, provided all the following criteria are met:

- At least one PITA member³ with a place of business located in Palestine must submit a joint proposal with one or more Palestinian universities.
- Faculty members cannot be included in two projects with two different companies at the same time;
- Ideas put forward in the proposals should be commercial in nature.
- Each proposal can have one participating lecturer/professor only.
- Each proposal must have a section describing its impact
- Each proposal must have a section discussing how the project will achieve sustainability
- The lecturer/ professor/ faculty member should not have any conflict of interest with a Palestinian ICT company that will be submitting the proposal together for The Jossor project.

4. Bridges Innovation Program Selection

PITA and PMDP will be putting this call for proposals (RFP) for its members⁴ to submit the full proposals which the details and the activities. PITA and PMDP shall be establishing a selection committee per cycle of the RFP. The selection committee includes⁵ members (one from PITA, one

² Non Pita members are encourage join PITA and to apply and enroll in the program. For more details please check PITA website : www.pita.ps

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from PMDP, three additional experts “Business & Management, Technical, Academic”, the names of the experts will be decided anonymously at a later date. The Bridges Steering Committee will suggest a pool of experts for that.

5. Research/initiative proposals characteristics

Proposals should target some or all of the following research/initiative goals:

- a. Novel and Creative Solutions.
- b. Immediate Relevance.
- c. Potential for Financial/Commercial Impact.
- d. Dissemination and Potential for Academic Publication.
- e. Pilot Deployment.

6. Proposals structure

The proposal must have the following structure and should successses 20 pages and contain the following parts:

- Cover page
- Abstract (1500 character)
- Introduction and state of art (2-3 pages max).
- Objectives and problem statement (1-2 page max)
- Relevance
- Methodology, action plan , and the role of each party (2-3 pages max)
- Impact (1 page max)
- Sustainability (1 page max)
- Resources, CV's and any additional supportive information.
- IP agreement (0.5 page max)
- MOU between the university and the local IT company

7. Operational Matters

If a proposal is selected, a Term of Agreement to be signed by the company, the faculty member and his/her university, PITA, and the PMDP and, regarding the rights, commitments and obligations of each party.

8. Bridges Structure:

With the Bridges Program:

- The university will dedicate 3 credit hours for maximum two semesters of its faculty member to devote this time to the project in the local private ICT company premises
- The program shall compensate the university on the time allocated to the project of the participating faculty member's salary. That will be equivalent to the salary on 3 credit hours per semester. The calculation of 3 credit hours will be based on the following:

The salary of one credit hour = The faculty member annual salary divided by 24 credit hours for two semesters in a year⁵

- The total load, per semester, for the faculty member must not exceed 15 credit hour as the following:
 - (Max of 9 hours (3 courses) for each teacher- normal teaching hours
 - 3 hours for Jossor project
 - Any extra hours will be overtime for none teaching courses(Max for 2-3 hours).
- Projects can be of any duration up to 1 academic year.
- It's preferred to engage students⁶ in the program.. The purpose of enrolling the students is to be active part of the project and to gain the soft, technical skills and operational skills.

With the Bridges Innovation Program, PITA and PMDP believe that the benefits are multifaceted:

- Faculty members will have more incentive to work on research and development or product development and to have the opportunity to network with the industry and its developing trends, interact with clients' needs and to apply their research and knowledge in practice;
- Students will have the opportunity to working on commercial oriented projects , will interact with end-user needs, will develop their soft and technical skills and will be trained to meet the business requirements;
- Companies shall be able to work on R&D projects and/or product development that may lead to improve their offerings; This program building stronger tied between universities and companies, leading to a better IT ecosystem in Palestine;
- It is preferable if the proposed project priorities are based on national interests.
- The project targets BSc students only. Master students cannot be included, at least in the first cycle
- The project should target gender, and will have extra point during the evaluation.

⁵ According to the national scale of MOHE

⁶ The project may cover travel expenses for certain students who are involved in the project

9. Intellectual Property Rights

- The private company will have the Commercial Intellectual Property (IP) rights of the project outcome. While Faculty members and Participating Universities can still use the project for academic publishing and other educational purpose.

10. Project duration

The proposed project timeframe cannot exceed more than 1 academic year.

11. Schedule

Event	Date
Launching of the RFP at PITA Web site and news paper	Jan 12 th , 13 th 2016
Launching workshop	Feb 2 nd 2016
Last date for receiving proposals	March 31 st 2016 at 12:00
Publication of results of the analysis and selection process	April 17 th 2016

12. Announcement of results

The results of the selection process will be announced on PITA's Web Site at www.pita.ps and by communication to the proponents, and PITA will notify the winning universities and local ICT firms.

13. Analysis and selection Criteria of the submitted proposals

- All submissions must adhere to the terms stated in this Request for Proposals.
- Proposals should be composed in clear and well-structured English, as they will be reviewed by a multidisciplinary and international team of specialists.
- The selection process will use a merit review and comparative analysis. These will use reviewer's reports, following the criteria used for the selection of research/initiative grants selected by PITA, plus the Joint Steering Committee for the PITA-PMDDP cooperation.
- Individuals participating in a submitted proposal will not take part in review of proposals.
- All proposals will be analyzed evaluated and selected using the following criteria:
 - a) **Ambition** of the proposed project and how it will drive industry best practice.
 - b) **Clarity in presentation of clear project goals**, how the project will add value to the company and the university and the project's execution requirements (technical and material).
 - c) **Engineering diligence**, including interface definitions, testing methodology, and plans for experimental deployment.

- d) **Qualifications of the project team:** including technical capabilities of the proposed team (which can include both company staff and faculty), history of previous work in areas relevant to this RFP, successful completion of previous projects, teaching awards, and publications.
- e) **Ability to complete the project,** including the adequacy of resources available, institutional support, reasonableness of timelines, and qualifications of identified team members, and evidence of ability to complete the project within identified/available resources
- f) **Potential for wide dissemination and use of intellectual property created,** including specific plans for publications, conference presentations, web sites, as well as plans to distribute content in multiple formats or languages.
- g) **How the project will drive towards sustainability** of improvement in the capabilities of both IT professionals and university faculty.
- h) **All submissions must adhere** to the terms stated in this Request for Proposals.
- i) The pilot initiative will include **maximum of five joint projects/ideas** from universities in partnership with local private companies
- j) **Proposals should be submitted no later than the 31st of March 2016, at 12:00pm.**

Criteria	Weight
Objective and soundness of the methodology	20%
Qualification of the team, and the resources	10%
Innovation and Technical excellency	20%
Impact and Suitability	20%
Possibility of commercialization	15%
Gender participation	5%
Number of students	5%
Clear IP and roles	5%

14. Information and clarification

- Please send any questions to shireen@pita.ps. Please put “RFP Bridges” in the subject line of your e-mail message to ensure a prompt and proper response.