



وزارة الاتصالات وتكنولوجيا المعلومات  
Ministry of Telecom. & Information Technology



# TECHNOLOGY FOR YOUTH AND JOBS (TechStart)

## ADDITIONAL FINANCING Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) December 2022

ID: P180570

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## Abbreviations and Acronyms

AF	Additional Financing
EQA	Environment Quality Authority
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ESO	Environmental and Social Officer
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
MTIT	Ministry of Telecom and Information Technology
PIA	Project Implementation Unit
R&D	Research and Development
SEP	Stakeholder Engagement Plan
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises

PITA	The Palestinian Information Technology Association
PIPA	The Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency
TA	Technical Assistance

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## 1. Introduction

In accordance with the World Bank's Environmental and Social Standard 10 (ESS10), a stakeholder engagement plan (SEP) needs to be prepared and implemented for all Bank supported investment policy financing (IPF) projects. Hence, an SEP was prepared and disclosed for the Technology for Youth and Jobs Project- TechStart (Parent Project). The original SEP was disclosed on the Bank's external website and on the Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology (MTIT)'s websites on March 24, 2020.

The SEP for the Parent project has undergone a revision during 2022 to reflect the updates in project implementation and stakeholder engagement activities since project's effectiveness. During the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2022, preparations have been initiated for an Additional Financing for the Technology for Youth and Jobs Project (TechStart), herein referred to as the (Additional Financing). This includes the update of the SEP and the other project's environmental and social (E&S) instruments of the parent project.

Therefore, this updated version of the SEP (November 2022) has been prepared in line with the Additional Financing, to scale up activities and provide support to the Palestinian IT sector through the existing components of the project. This updated SEP is structured as follows: Section 1 provides an overview of the parent project components and the activities introduced under the Additional Financing. It also outlines the environmental and social risks of the project; Sections 2, 3, and 4 describe the purpose and timing of stakeholder engagement program summarize the main goals of the stakeholder engagement program and the envisaged schedule for the various stakeholder engagement activities. Section 5 identifies the key stakeholders who will be informed and consulted about the project, including individuals, groups, or communities that are affected or likely to be affected by the project (project-affected parties - PAPs) and may have an interest in the project (other interested parties - OIPs). Section 6 provides a summary of stakeholder engagement activities that have been undertaken to date for the original project and for the Additional Financing activities. It also includes the proposed strategy for information disclosure which briefly describe what information will be disclosed and the types of methods that will be used to communicate this information to each of the stakeholder groups; Section 7 describes the resources and responsibilities for implementing stakeholders' engagement activities; Section 8 summarizes the Grievance Mechanisms that have been established on the project's level and the workers' level; and, Section 9 describes the monitoring and reporting process.

### 1.1 Background: Rationale for Additional Financing

The proposed additional financing will allow the team to scale up its support to the Palestinian IT sector through the existing components of the project. , as the following:

- The additional financing will help mitigate the significant impact on the Palestinian economy, firms and workers from multiple ongoing crises since 2020. After the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of the war in Ukraine, with its reverberations, added additional shocks to West Bank and Gaza economy that was still recovering from the pandemic and was facing urgent development challenges. This crisis, with its disruptions on value chains, prices, is damaging otherwise healthy firms through four channels: (i) falling demand, (ii) reduced input supply, (iii) tightening of credit conditions and liquidity crunch, and (iv) rising uncertainty. Without timely support, there will be persistent harm to otherwise-healthy firms, which could be shuttered. The AF will also enable scaling up of

existing grant instruments to support more firms to grow, to improve the digital capabilities of their workforce and firm capabilities and increase the overall competitiveness of the Palestinian IT services firms in regional and global markets.

- The AF will also strengthen interventions to address key structural factors in the Palestinian IT innovation ecosystem that prevent scaling and technology upgrading. The Palestinian IT export sector remains 'stuck' in a low equilibrium of competing on price and geographic location, whereas broader technological capabilities, better brand and trust, and more in-house talent would allow it to compete on a broader range of services with more international buyers. TechStart aims to shift the dynamic equilibrium of the Palestinian IT sector toward one of continuous upgrading of firm capabilities, improving the supply of skilled graduates, increasing demand from international buyers and investors, and absorption of hi-tech Knowledge in the ecosystem.
- This AF operation will provide relief and facilitate faster recovery of IT services firms, including startups, from recurring crises. This will be achieved through the scaling up of human capital improvement stipends for individuals to gain increased skills, while also supporting improved managerial capabilities and developing recommendations to increase female participation in the sector (under component 1).
- The AF will also allow TechStart to increase its efforts at improving international market linkages, key to enabling Palestinian IT services firms to scale up, and increase its efforts at promoting and facilitating foreign direct investment (FDI) in the Palestinian IT ecosystem. Taken together, the AF will support increased firm resilience to crises related shocks in West Bank and Gaza.
- Finally, the project will also strengthen project management to allow the implementing agency to manage an increased number of grant application, evaluations, and disbursement.

The Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology (MTIT) has requested that the project needs additional financing to increase the impact of TechStart project on the ground and which will deploy donors financial support to the tech sector in a comprehensive and strategic manner. The scope of the additional financing is described in Section 1.3.3 below

## 1.2. Project Development Objective

The PDO will remain the same as the parent project: to increase economic opportunities for IT service firms in the West Bank and Gaza (WB&G).

### 1.3. Project Description

#### 1.3.1. Parent Project

The Technology for Youth and Jobs Project (TechStart) and Additional Financing aim to increase economic opportunities for IT service firms in the West Bank and Gaza. The project aims to shift the dynamic equilibrium of the Palestinian IT sector toward one of continuous upgrading of firm capabilities and employment growth. This project operation, as designed for the parent project, included four components tackling the supply side, the enabling ecosystem, and the demand side of IT services. Component 1 focuses on the supply side, seeking to improve the capabilities of IT service firms by supporting the technological and

managerial upgrading of firms, including the upskilling of graduates and supporting the role of women in the IT sector. Component 2 focuses on improving the IT ecosystem by investing in (a) Research & Development facilities which can provide access to technology and services to the entire sector, (b) IT and office infrastructure for businesses who face the most market distortions from trade barriers, and (c) new business service providers. Component 3 focuses on connecting Palestinian IT services sector with regional and global markets and supporting business partnerships and investments through activities that increase awareness of the Palestinian value proposition and opportunities. Component 4 provides project management and monitoring. The proposed additional financing will allow the team to scale up its support to the Palestinian IT sector through the existing components of the project.

The parent project, with a total budget of 15 USD million, articulated around 4 components detailed above.

**1.3.2. Additional Financing and Restructuring** The proposed AF includes an additional financing amount of US\$ 15,55 million in addition to a level two restructuring due to the extension of the parent project closing date to October 30, 2027 and change in the targets of the results indicators. All components of the project will be scaled up, respectively: a) Component 1 “Improving IT service capabilities”, Component 2 “Improving the IT services ecosystem”, Component 3 “Improving market access and increasing demand and investments” and Component 4 “Project Management”. No changes to parent project components are envisioned.

### 1.3.3. Project Components

The project consists of the following components:

Component 1 “Improving IT service capabilities” focuses on the supply side, seeking to improve the capabilities of IT service firms by supporting the technological and managerial upgrading of firms, including the upskilling of graduates and supporting the role of women in the IT sector. Component 2 “Improving the IT services ecosystem” focuses on improving the IT ecosystem by investing in (a) Research & Development facilities which can provide access to technology and services to the entire sector, (b) IT and office infrastructure for businesses who face the most market distortions from trade barriers, and (c) new business service providers. Component 3 “Improving market access and increasing demand and investments”. focuses on connecting Palestinian IT services sector with regional and global markets and supporting business partnerships and investments through activities that increase awareness of the Palestinian value proposition and opportunities. Component 4 “Project Management” provides project management and monitoring. A full description of the project components is provided in the Project Paper. Table 1 below provides the list of activities and project beneficiaries under each component:

Table 1: Project components and subcomponents and their beneficiaries

Activities		Beneficiaries of Technical Assistance or Funding
1	Component 1: Improving IT service capabilities	
1.1	Human capital improvement stipends	Individuals and firms
1.2	Advisory services on managerial capabilities	Firms
1.3	IT and gender needs assessment and engagement	Individuals and firms
1.4	COVID-19 employment support subsidies	Individuals and firms
2	Component 2: Improving the IT services ecosystem	
2.1	Seed grants to stimulate private investments in the IT service ecosystem	Individuals and firms
2.2	Grants for shared R&D hubs	Firms
2.3	Grants for IT business infrastructure (focus on Gaza)	Firms
3	Component 3: Improving market access and increasing demand and investments	
3.1	Awareness raising and international market linkages	Firms
3.2	Promotion and facilitation of FDI in the Palestinian IT ecosystem	Firms
4	Component 4: Project management and implementation support	
4.1	Project management and monitoring; Technical assistance to MTIT	PIA

#### 1.4 Potential Environment and Social Risks and Mitigation Measures

As with the parent project, the Additional Financing has the same E&S baseline. All environmental and social risks are identified, with a particular focus on labor and working conditions and disposal of e-waste, SEA/SH, etc, which will be addressed through the updated Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF), which sets out environmental and social (E&S) risk assessment requirements of each sub-component/activity. The LMP also includes Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) procedures of workers, GBV/SEA/SH issues and relevant aspects of labor management and conditions. This SEP was also updated for the AF to include consultation with the stakeholders and information dissemination as required under the ESS10. The project has limited environmental and social impacts and the E&S risks has been rated Moderate.



### Environmental Risks

The environmental risks associated with the project are the same as for the Parent project. They are mainly associated with the expected increased number of IT equipment, and therefore increase of e-waste. The inappropriate management of this e-waste could cause serious health problem for workers, the surrounding community and the environment. DAI developed an E- waste management plan (approved by the Bank in August 2021) that was implemented and adopted by all project beneficiaries throughout project implementation. DAI has recruited a part-time Environmental and Social Officer (ESO), who is responsible for managing and supervising the parent project overall E&S aspects and will continue to support the AF. PIA is in compliance with the ESCP requirements during the reporting periods of the parent project.

### Social Risks

The social risks associated with the project are the same as the Parent project. The social risks are limited in nature and scale, and can be summarized as follows: (1) risks related to social exclusion in its various forms that would need to be mitigated through ensuring that project benefits, such as access to grants, and job opportunities, can be accessed and optimized for the most vulnerable and youth, including those from poor communities and women, (2) risk of exposure of youth, including vulnerable youth and women to sexual exploitation, or poor working conditions, (3) risks related to labor and working conditions for project workers and beneficiaries. LMP was prepared to address the labor related issues. An assessment of Gender Based Violence (GBV) was done and the risk is rated low. The project will not result in any risks related to involuntary resettlement. Private sector firms seeking grants to establish new enterprises or subsidiaries will need to demonstrate adherence to willing-buyer willing-seller criteria to qualify.

### E&S Mitigation Measures

The AF will have the same E&S risks and impacts. The measures to address environmental and social risks in the parent project remain the same, including the preparation of relevant instruments to mitigate the risks and negative impacts. In accordance with ESS1, an ESMF was prepared and includes the requirements for managing solid waste, e-waste, and occupational health and safety. In accordance with ESS2, a Labor Management Procedure (LMP) was prepared which identifies the types of labor, measures to mitigate for any GBV issues at the workplace, and a Grievance Mechanism (GM) for project workers. In accordance with ESS3, resource efficiency and climate-change benefits have been analyzed. Measures for management of waste and pollution prevention is described in the ESMF. A Stakeholder Engagement Plan in accordance with ESS10 was prepared to ensure meaningful engagement with the project stakeholders and mitigate risks related to social exclusion of project benefits. Finally, an Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) with specific deliverables, timeframe and responsibilities was prepared. The ESCP, ESMF, SEP and LMP were disclosed<sup>1</sup> in-country by the client on March 12, 2020. The ESCP, ESRS and SEP were disclosed on the World Bank's external website on March 24, 2020, while the ESMF and LMP were disclosed on the World Bank's external website on May 21, 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> The ESCP, ESMF, SEP and LMP were disclosed in-country by the client in Arabic on May 21, 2020.

### 1.5. Implementation Arrangements

The AF will be implemented by the PIA. The institutional arrangement of the AF will be the same to the parent project. The project's part time Environmental and Social Officer (ESO) will be responsible for the monitoring of the implementation of the project Environmental and Social requirements. The PIA will continue financing an Environmental and Social Officer as financed by the parent project.

### 1.6 Environmental and Social Status of Implementation and Performance under the Parent Project

The PIA has taken several actions to ensure that project activities are implemented in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner, in accordance with the national regulations, the Bank's Environmental and Social Framework (ESF) and WBG EHS Guidelines. In November 2021, and in view of the fact that the project primarily includes low to moderate risk E&S activities, the E&S screening, review, clearance and disclosure requirements for E&S instruments were revised by the Bank to make the process more efficient. The project ESMF has been updated by the PIA to reflect the new simplified approach. All site-specific Environmental and Social Assessments (ESAs) were conducted in accordance with the E&S instruments prepared for the project including the ESMF, SEP, LMP and the simplified approach. More than 24 IT firms were assessed using an E&S screening tool prepared by the PIA. The ESO monitored compliance of the beneficiary firms with the E&S requirements as per the screening reports. The E&S quarterly and annual reports were incorporated in the project's performance monitoring reports submitted for the Bank review by the project director.

The PIA has also updated the project's SEP to reflect the workers' GM and GBV/SEA/SH updates in line with ESS2 and the project's LMP. Based on the updated SEP, the PIA shall also prepare a six-month action plan.

Several stakeholder engagement activities were conducted under the parent project. Stakeholder consultation meetings took place as part of the preparation of the project and included preliminary meetings with different stakeholders during the screening/scoping for, individual meetings and round table meetings with different entities during the preparation phase. The main consultations took place both in West Bank and Gaza during September 23-25, 2019 and November 26-28, 2019, and included discussions of project components and activities, targeted groups, scoping of potential and environmental risks, institutional and implementation arrangements. As of the project effectiveness in October 2020, the PIA conducted six stakeholder engagement activities. A description of stakeholder engagement activities is provided under section 4.1 below.

The PIA has established a GM for the parent project to receive and address concerns emerging during implementation of the activities. The GM includes an appeal process for unsatisfactory complainants, and provides accessible and multiple online and offline grievance uptake channels. A record of grievances received is also maintained by the PIA. The parent project has recorded four project specific grievances. The registered complaints were related to project selection of beneficiaries. In line with the GM manual, all complaints were documented, accepted, resolved and closed within the proposed time frame in the GM manual. The PIA provided written feedback to complainants about the selection criteria that

was conducted by the technical committee and clear reasons behind the rejections. The GM also allows anonymous grievances to be raised and addressed. A description of the project GM is provided under section 6.

The PIA maintained a frequent and timely disclosure of project information for all events and information sessions on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn), project website ([www.techstart.ps](http://www.techstart.ps)), MTIT website and its social media platforms, and local newspapers. Information regarding the project GM has been disseminated and continues to be shared in ongoing consultations. PIA has ensured compliance with the LMP. LMP requirements were incorporated in the grant agreements. Contractors and firms were requested to comply with the minimum age of employment, minimum wage, provision of valid insurance against work injuries, provision of rent contracts/proof of ownership, and provision of employment contracts for workers among other things. Compliance with these measures were verified prior signing grant agreements and monitored throughout implementation. Beneficiary firms, their employees as well as contractors were requested to sign the project's code of conduct and abide by its provisions.

A workers' GM was established in the PIA to receive and handle direct workers' grievances including an anonymous intake mechanism. The direct workers' GM shall be used for the AF. Beneficiary companies were requested to establish Grievance Mechanism for their workers prior to the project launching. The E&S Officer at the PIA will be responsible for monitoring grievances managed at the companies' level and shall regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the GM.

PIA has ensured compliance with the Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP) during the reporting period. An Environmental and Social Officer (ESO) is in place to oversee the implementation of the E&S requirements and monitor the environmental and social compliance. The E&S requirements were also integrated in all project design manuals. The ESO provided support to the beneficiary firms on environmental and social management.

The E&S performance rating for the parent project is Satisfactory.

## 2. Stakeholder Engagement Plan Objective

The Additional Financing, as with the "the Technology for Youth and Jobs Project (Parent Project) is being prepared under the World Bank's Environment and Social Framework (ESF). As per the Environmental and Social Standard: ESS 10 Stakeholders Engagement and Information Disclosure, PIA and MTIT should provide stakeholders with timely, relevant, understandable and accessible information, and consult with them in a culturally appropriate manner, which is free of manipulation, interference, coercion, discrimination and intimidation.

The overall objective of this Stakeholder Engagement Plan (SEP) is to define a program for stakeholder engagement, including public information disclosure and consultation, throughout the entire project cycle, for both the parent project and the AF. The SEP outlines the ways in which the project team will communicate with stakeholders and includes a mechanism by which people can raise concerns, provide feedback, or make complaints about project and any activities related to the project. The involvement of the local population is essential to the success and sustainability of the project in order to ensure smooth

collaboration between project staff and local communities and to minimize and mitigate environmental and social risks related to the proposed project activities.

This Stakeholder Engagement Plan is updated for the AF to engage citizens through the Project, and for public information disclosure. Revisions to the SEP will be made during implementation, as needed.

### 1.3. Purpose of the SEP

The purpose of a Stakeholder Engagement Plan is to explain how Stakeholder Engagement will be practised throughout the course of the project life cycle and which methods will be used as part of the process; as well as to outline the responsibilities of PIA and other parties in the implementation of stakeholder engagement activities.

### 3. Stakeholder identification and analysis

The term “**Project-affected Parties**” includes “those likely to be affected by both the Parent Project and AF, because of actual impacts or potential risks to their physical environment, health, security, cultural practices, well-being, or livelihoods. These stakeholders may include individuals or groups, including local communities”. They are the individuals or households most likely to observe changes from environmental and social impacts of the project. The stakeholder analysis and identification were done following consultations and discussions with officials in the MTIT and the World Bank team during the preparation phase for the Parent Project and revised during preparations for the AF.

The term “**Other interested parties**” (OIPs) refers to “individuals, groups, or organizations with an interest in the project, which may be because of the project location, its characteristics, its impacts, or matters related to public interest.

#### 3.1. Project-affected Parties (PAPs)

Within the scope of this project, there are two main categories for the project-affected parties, namely firms and individuals.

##### 3.1.1. Firms

This category of PAPs includes Palestinian IT services SMEs, startups and business service providers. IT services include software publishing; computer programming, consultancy and related activities; data processing, hosting and related activities.

##### 3.1.2. Individuals

This category of PAPs managers and owners of businesses located in the West Bank and Gaza and students, software engineers and IT professionals—many of which young, recent graduates, and Unemployed women computer science graduates

. Table 2 below summarizes the key categories of PAPs and their relation in the project.

Table 2: key categories of PAPs and their relation in the project

Affected Parties	Type	Description and Relationship to the Project
<b>Firms</b>	IT services SMEs and business service providers working in the technology field in software development, computer programming and consultancy, data processing, hosting or related activities, training and HR-IT Service providers.	Technical assistance and grants to develop their human, managerial, and technological capabilities of IT service. Technical assistance to the management teams of Palestinian IT service firms will include management, organizational development, strategy and leadership assistance. Seed Grants to stimulate private sector investment in IT Sector, R&D matching Grants, IT Infrastructure Grants.
<b>Individuals</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Managers and owners of businesses,</li> <li>2) Students and engineers and IT professionals including unemployed women IT and computer science graduates, new hires, young software engineers with disabilities, industry experts.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Human Capital Improvement Stipends" Program will help Managers and owners of businesses to skill up their workforce and scale up their business, increase their opportunities to growth, and attract new local and international clients.</li> <li>2) Human Capital Improvement Stipends" Program will also benefit and employ unemployed young and women engineers and IT graduates in the IT sector.</li> <li>3) Training and behavioral interventions to strengthen the role of women in the IT sector.</li> </ol> Seed Grants to establish new IT services/ operations.
<b>MTIT</b>		MTIT will benefit from the technical assistance provided through the project

### 3.2. Other interested parties (OIPs)

Table 3 below summarizes the key categories of OIPs and the respective justification for their interest in the project. Along with these external OIPs, there are number of internal interested parties with stakes in the project including MTIT staff. In March 2021, a Steering Committee was selected for TechStart project from different ministries and associations (as a key category

of OIP's, See Table 5). The Steering Committee mandate is to advise and make recommendations for the public and private sector to improve the economic opportunities for individuals and firms in the IT sector in the West Bank and Gaza, with emphasis on TechStart project areas of interventions, as well as support reforms needed to ensure a successful project outcome.

Table 3: Project Other Interested Parties

Category	Institution	Interest
<b>Ministries and Government agencies</b>	MTIT	The MTIT acts as the Head of the Project Steering Committee
	Prime Minister's Office	Overall coordination together with MTIT as part of the Project Steering Committee.
	Ministry of Finance	Overall coordination together with MTIT as part of the Project Steering Committee.
	Ministry of Entrepreneurship and Empowerment	Overall coordination together with MTIT as part of the Project Steering Committee.
	Ministry of National Economy	Overall coordination together with MTIT as part of the Project Steering Committee
	Ministry of Higher Education	Overall coordination together with MTIT as part of the Project Steering Committee.
<b>Private Sector organizations</b>	The Palestinian Information Technology Association (PITA), The Palestinian Investment Promotion Agency (PIPA), PalTrade, Palestine Computer Society	Overall coordination together with MTIT as part of the Project Steering Committee . The PIA will also work in close collaboration with PIPA, PalTrade and PITA to contribute to capacity building of the agencies to learn how to attract and manage investment projects, attract FDI, increase export of IT services.
<b>Academic and R&amp;D centers</b>	Universities, professors and their students, centers of innovation	R&D center will be expected to offer technology facilities and services to private sector clients, academia, students for R&D projects. The project will finance office and technology equipment, software, as well as technical staff salaries during the first year of operation. Applications from universities or other research institutions will only be considered if in partnership with private sector and if they include the creation of a separate legal entity with an autonomous

		governance and management structure to host the R&D center.
<b>Consultants/Service Providers</b>	Business service providers, including training and HR-IT service providers	Consultants/Service Providers will be involved in the delivery of the project—and sequentially in the agreements between the service providers and benefiting firms.
<b>Civil Society Organizations (CBOs)</b>	Youth and Women led Associations such as Dimensions Healthcare and AISHA Association	Youth and women led associations will disseminate information about the project and ensure that youth and women led businesses/startups, including disabled people, have access to project's information and know about the eligibility criteria
<b>Press and media</b>	TV and radio, social media platforms	Inform the public about the Project implementation and planned activities. Play an important role in promoting the IT sector locally and internationally.
<b>International IT companies</b>	International IT buyers and investors	Foreign investors and international buyers who will benefit from improved skills of IT service companies. Deals among international buyers, international investors and local firms.

### 3.3. Disadvantaged / vulnerable individuals or groups

Through this updated SEP, and for the parent project and AF, the PIA aims to ensure that the engagement process is inclusive, individuals and groups who may find it more difficult to benefit from the opportunities offered by the Project and those who may be 'directly and differentially or disproportionately affected by it because of their vulnerable status' are identified and considered. The parent Project and AF will ensure specific steps are taken to reach these groups and offer them the opportunity to engage in discussion about the Project and its activities. Table 4 below shows the main vulnerable groups identified for this project and their relation to the project.

Table 4: Project Vulnerable Group

<b>Vulnerable Group</b>	<b>Description and Relationship to the Project</b>
<b>Women</b>	Women especially recent graduates suffer from high unemployment due to gender inequality that make access to the job market difficult. The project will seek to increase the access of women to IT sector, including to management and leadership positions where they are missing. Local firms benefiting from project activities will adopt more inclusive employment approach, allowing for a hybrid work environment including flexible working schedules, working from home options, transportation support or



	other possible mechanisms that would make positions more female-friendly.
<b>Women and youth with disabilities</b>	People with disabilities (PWD) face additional constraints to participate in the labor market, especially in Gaza where the conflict of May 2021 has exacerbated an already alarming gender disparity in labor market outcomes between men and women but also increased the number of physical and mental injuries among women and youth. The PIA will ensure that PWD benefit from the project activities which will adopt more inclusive employment approach, allowing for a hybrid work environment including flexible working schedules, working from home options, transportation support or other possible mechanisms.
<b>Unemployed Young engineers and IT graduates</b>	Unemployed individuals risk social exclusion and are likely to have reduced opportunities for participation in public engagement and potentially less access to information about grants, and job opportunities. The PIA will conduct a needs assessment as well as outreach with relevant CSOs/ Universities to further identify the needs and interests of this group.

### 3.4. Summary of stakeholder interest in and influence over the project

Table 5 below summarizes the level of interest in and potential influence over the project of the various stakeholder categories identified above. Categories color-coded in red will require regular and frequent engagement, typically face-to-face and several times per year, including written and verbal information. Categories color-coded in orange will require regular engagement during some activities, typically through written information. Finally, categories color-coded in green will require infrequent engagement, typically through indirect written information (e.g. mass media).

Table 5 Analysis and prioritization of stakeholder groups based on level of interest in and influence over the project.

<b>Influence Interest</b>	<b>High ability or likelihood to influence or impact the project</b>	<b>Medium ability or likelihood to influence or impact the project</b>	<b>Low ability or likelihood to influence or impact the project</b>
<b>High level of interest in the project</b>	IT service SMEs and business service providers; Managers and owners of businesses; engineers and IT professionals; MTIT and MOF	Universities	Government agencies
<b>Medium level of interest in the project</b>	Press and media	Private Sector organizations	
<b>Low level of interest in the project</b>			Other project developers and their financiers

## 4. Stakeholder Engagement Program

### 4.1 Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Activities Conducted Under the Parent Project

Several stakeholder engagement activities were conducted under the parent project. Stakeholder consultation meetings took place as part of the preparation of the project and included preliminary meetings with different stakeholders during the screening/scoping for, individual meetings and round table meetings with different entities during the preparation phase. The main consultations took place both in West Bank and Gaza during September 23-25, 2019 and November 26-28, 2019, and included discussions on project components and activities, targeted groups, scoping of potential and environmental risks, institutional and implementation arrangements.

As of the project effectiveness in October 2020, the PIA conducted 5 stakeholder engagement activities. The PIA conducted six main stakeholder engagement activities under the Parent project. In March 2021, the PIA conducted a consultation meeting with project stakeholders to introduce the TechStart project, its objectives, components, risks and mitigation measures and the project's E&S instruments. This engagement activity has given the chance for project beneficiaries and partners to interact and provide their feedback and concerns. In July 2021, the PIA held a launching event for the "Gaza Tech and Innovative Recovery Program", which aimed to provide urgent financial support to Palestinian tech and tech-enabled companies that have been damaged partially or fully by the 2021 war on Gaza to enable them to recover from the great losses to their business operations and infrastructure. In August 2021, the PIA also organized an information session to launch the COVID-19 Support Program", which aimed to provide financial support to Palestinian companies struggling through the current COVID-19 pandemic. During 2022, two consultation meetings were conducted (March 2022 and August 2022) under the Human Capital Improvement Stipends Program (HCIS program) aiming to introduce the new program and its stipend windows; which will help the IT firms and startups increase their opportunities to attract new international clients by employing several measures to retain, enhance, and train their employees.

Participants in the consultation meetings included entrepreneurs, SMEs, youth and female led businesses, IT university students, IT university graduates, newly hired youth, Ministry of Telecom and Information Technology (MTIT) and TechStart team. The consultation meetings included informing participants about the project components and activities, targeted groups, potential social and environmental risks and mitigation measures, institutional and implementation arrangements. At the end of each meeting, a Q&A session discussions conducted with different types of stakeholders was organized. Participants asked questions about the selection criteria, hiring procedures, beneficiary individuals and firms, stipends, trainings and internships, IT-related studies. Participants inquired about the grant ceiling for IT companies, the eligibility types of operational expenses that can be covered by the program and whether they cover items such as Amazon cloud services. Also, participants inquired about training and benefits covered by different programs under the project such as the

PIONEER program. They also asked about having international partners (IPs) and whether IPs can be a company specialized in the field such as an advanced technical training company or a company specialized in human resources in the field of technologies with experience in the same field globally.

A detailed description of each consultation meeting is appended as Annex 1.

## 4.2 Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Activities Conducted for the Additional Financing

In accordance with the ESS10 requirements, the PIA conducted a virtual consultation meeting on October 26 2022, for both the announcement of the Additional Financing as well as for the launch of Improving the IT Service Ecosystem Program “Pioneer”.

The consultation meeting started by introducing the TechStart project, its objectives, components, and its implementation procedures. The session highlighted on the additional financing obtained from the Dutch and the SWISS governments and the EU, implemented by DAI. The meeting’s objective was also to present Pioneer Program, targeted groups, potential social and environmental risks and mitigation measures including the GRM system. At the end of the meeting, a Q&A session was conducted, and feedback was obtained from the participants

The TechStart Environmental and Social Officer explained the Environmental and social Management Framework (ESMF) highlighting on the identified social and environmental risks under TechStart project. The ESO suggested measures and plans to reduce, mitigate, and/or offset potential risks. Social and environmental risks have been identified including: discrimination and social exclusion, specifically relating to vulnerable groups; labor and workers’ rights; sexual exploitation and abuse / sexual harassment (SEA/SH); and minor environmental impacts such as occupational health and safety risks, and e-waste production. Beneficiary firms will be requested to comply with the LMP provisions prepared for the project including signing Code of Conduct and establishing a GM for their workers. Continuous consultations as detailed in the SEP will be conducted to inform stakeholders about the project progress. During the project’s implementation period, it is expected to receive complaints from the project’s affected parties. To this end, a system for filing and handling project’s complaints is established. The ESO also explained that the GM system includes special channels to receive the Sexual Harassment and GBV complaints, which will be taken into consideration with the highest level of confidentiality.

Participants in the consultation meetings represented over 95 IT firms working in West Bank and Gaza: Entrepreneurs, SMEs, youth and female led businesses such as Finbloom for Financial Solutions Management, Provision and Creativity for digital marketing, Ministry of Telecom and Information Technology (MTIT), Palestinian IT organizations (PITA, PICTI), TechStart team and the World Bank group). Participants raised questions regarding selection criteria and project activities such as the target threshold for the New IT Training Service Providers. Participants requested clarifications on salaries and fees associated with delivery/on-going execution of core business functions covered by the grants.

A detailed description of the consultation meeting is appended as Annex 2.

#### 4.3 Planned stakeholder engagement activities

Stakeholder engagement activities need to provide specific stakeholder groups with relevant information and opportunities to voice their views on topics that matter to them. Table below presents the stakeholder engagement activities taking into consideration virtual engagement methods due to COVI-19 pandemic. The activity types and their frequency are adapted to the three main project stages (design and preparation; implementation and monitoring phase). A more detailed description of the stakeholder engagement methods used is included in section 4.2.

Table 6 Planned stakeholder engagement activities per project phase

Project stage	Target stakeholders	Topic(s) of engagement	Method(s) used	Location/frequency	Responsibilities
Design and preparation	Project Affected Parties: Firms; Individuals	Project information disclosure i.e. Project scope and rationale	Formal or bilateral meetings (Virtual or face to face)	- MTIT headquarters or Via Zoom  - Monthly meetings	- Environmental & Social Officer (ESO)/ PIA
		Project E&S principles.	- Group meetings, specifically for women and vulnerable groups (Virtual or face to face); Email		
		Receive feedback on the project's potential impact, expectations, and concerns			
		Receive Feedback on specific needs (capacity needs, future staff, trainings)			
		Grievance Mechanism (GRM) provision			
		SEP disclosure.			

Project stage	Target stakeholders	Topic(s) of engagement	Method(s) used	Location/frequency	Responsibilities
	<b>Other Interested Parties</b> (External): National Government Ministries; Academic and research institutions; centres of innovation; Press and media; IT associations; Private Sector and business advisors;	Project scope and rationale; activities, Introduction of project activities, information about time, date, venue of trainings GRM	- Individual meetings; (Virtual or face to face)  focus groups meetings; (Virtual or face to face) - Disclosure of written information - Brochures, posters, flyers, website - Grievance mechanism	- Project launch meetings; - MTIT headquarters	- ESO/PIA
	<b>Other Interested Parties:</b> (Internal) MTIT Staff; Service providers and monitoring Consultants;	Project information - scope, rationale activities, and E&S Principles; Grievance mechanism process	- Meetings; (Virtual or face to face) - Workshops; (Virtual or face to face) - Training on grievance mechanism for designated team members with general orientation for others.	As needed	- ESO/PIA - Contractor/sub-contractors;
<b>Implementation</b>	<b>Project Affected Parties:</b> Firms; Individuals	- Detailed information sessions about grants, stipends, TA to firms, facilitation of FDI for IT services...etc - Information about the	- Round table, focus groups and individual meetings; (virtual or face to face) - Email, -Mass/Social Media Communication – TV, radio,	- Meetings in the targeted locations (as needed) (periodic, throughout implementation phase) -Communication through mass/social media (as needed);	ESO, PIA

Project stage	Target stakeholders	Topic(s) of engagement	Method(s) used	Location/frequency	Responsibilities
		<p>Terms of Reference for Service Providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Applications and Selection criteria</li> <li>-Training</li> <li>-Awareness-raising campaigns and sector awareness</li> <li>-Facilitation and incentives for hiring women</li> <li>-Employment opportunities</li> <li>-Grievance mechanism process.</li> <li>-Obtain feedback on implementation and adapt as needed</li> <li>- Rapid Assessment on firms' improvement</li> <li>- IT and gender needs assessment and engagement</li> </ul> <p>Satisfaction with project activities</p> <p>Reports; including number of grievances</p>	<p>Facebook, SMS, WhatsApp;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Disclosure of written information</li> <li>- Brochures, posters, flyers, website</li> </ul>		

Project stage	Target stakeholders	Topic(s) of engagement	Method(s) used	Location/frequency	Responsibilities
		received within the reporting period (monthly, quarterly or annually) and number of those resolved Additional Financing			
	<b>Other Interested Parties (External):</b> National Government Ministries; Academic and research institutions; centers of innovation; Press and media; IT associations; Private Sector and business advisors;	Project scope and rationale; business assessments; activities Project E&S principles; Employment opportunities ; Environment al concerns; Additional Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Public announcements in accordance with official recruitment and/ or procurement s guidelines</li> <li>- Project tours for media, local representatives, social media activists and influencers.</li> </ul>	Individual meetings (virtual or face to face)  (As needed)	ESO, PIA
	<b>Other Interested Parties: (Internal)</b> MTIT Staff; Service providers and monitoring Consultants;	Project progress; E&S sub-plans; Grievance mechanism process for workers. Additional Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Meetings; (Virtual or face to face)</li> <li>- Workshops; (Virtual or face to face)</li> <li>- Training on grievance mechanism for designated team members with general</li> </ul>	MTIT headquarters (As needed)	- ESO, PIA

Project stage	Target stakeholders	Topic(s) of engagement	Method(s) used	Location/frequency	Responsibilities
			orientation for others.		
Monitoring	<b>Project Affected Parties:</b> Firms; Individuals;	Satisfaction with project activities, SEP activities and GRM process;	- Individual and focus group meetings (separate meetings for women and vulnerable); (Virtual or face to face) - post survey for a selected representative sample	- Meetings; -Reports - Survey (suggested to be conducted after six months or so from the stability of the operation and services).	ESO, PIA
	<b>Other Interested Parties (External):</b> National Government Ministries; Academic and research institutions; centers of innovation, Press and media; IT associations; Private Sector and business advisors;	Impact of project on developing IT sector; local firm's improvement and number of contracts reported by local firms either with other firms in the West Bank and Gaza or with international buyers; Grievance mechanism process;	- Public and individual Meetings (Virtual or face to face)	As needed	- ESO, PIA



#### 4.4. Engagement methods to be used

As for the parent project, the AF intends to utilize various methods of engagement that will be used as part of its continuous interaction with the stakeholders. The format of every consultation activity should meet general requirements on accessibility, i.e. should be held at venues that are easily reachable and do not require long commute, entrance fee or preliminary access authorization. The activity should also meet cultural appropriateness (i.e. with due respect to the local customs and norms), and inclusiveness, i.e. engaging all segments of the local society, including disabled persons, women, and other vulnerable individuals .

Those engagement methods shall include different size meetings and information sessions. If a large audience is expected to attend a public meeting, necessary arrangements will be made to ensure audibility and visibility of the presentation involved. This includes provision of a projector, places allocated for the wheelchair users, etc.

However, in line with the Government guidelines to minimize the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) and to maintain a safe and healthy environment for the community, specifically beneficiaries and partners, the project will ensure that additional COVID-19 related safety measures are implemented in all stakeholder engagements. The project will be taking all necessary precautions in order to comply with the government and WHO guidelines, related to social distancing, masks and a complete ban on large gatherings.

Taking records of the meeting is essential both for the purposes of transparency and accuracy of capturing public comments. At least two ways of recording may be used, including :

- taking written minutes of the meeting ;
- photography.

A summary description of the engagement methods and techniques that will be applied by PIA is provided in Table 7. The summary presents a variety of approaches to facilitate the processes of information provision, information feedback as well as participation and consultation. As the PIA will also ensure coordination of the project's communications strategy, covering all project components and stakeholders, the engagement methods and tools will be included in the communications strategy.

Table 7 Engagement Methods and Tools

Stakeholder Group	Key Characteristics	Language Needs	Preferred Notification Means / Method	Contents
Government officials, NGOs, private sector organizations, and universities	-To distribute information to Government officials, NGOs, and private sector  -To invite stakeholders to	Arabic and English as needed	Correspondences (Phone, Emails, official letters)	Introduction of the project and information about time and venue of meetings

Stakeholder Group	Key Characteristics	Language Needs	Preferred Notification Means / Method	Contents
	meetings and follow-up.			
National government ministries, SMEs, universities	- To discuss specific project activities and related issues	Arabic and English as needed	Individual meetings (Virtual or face to face)	Project's specific activities and plans, design solutions and impact mitigation/management measures that require in-depth discussion with stakeholders.
IT professionals and engineers including young recent graduates and women.	- To be used to facilitate discussion with specific vulnerable groups - Presentation and an interactive Questions & Answers session with the participants	Arabic	Focus groups meetings Virtual or face to face)	- Information on project activities; Project E&S principles; - GRM guidebook/manual
IT service outsourcing SMEs and business service providers; managers and owners of businesses and engineers and IT professionals; universities and their students; IT associations	- Project launch meetings and community public meetings throughout the project life cycle. -To present project information affected parties and larger communities -To allow participants to provide their views and opinions -To build relationship with the stakeholders	Arabic with English translation	Information sessions/Public meetings Virtual or face to face)	- Important highlights of Project, announcements of planned activities, measures for risk mitigation (if any), overall progress and major achievements.

Stakeholder Group	Key Characteristics	Language Needs	Preferred Notification Means / Method	Contents
	-To register feedback on discussions and questions.			
IT service outsourcing SMEs and business service providers; managers and owners of businesses and engineers and IT professionals; universities and their students; IT associations	A survey will be carried out towards the stability of the project operation.	Arabic	Survey (Virtual or face to face)	Stakeholders' experience and feedback about the project
General population, and other stakeholders	A social media expert (from PIA) is engaged on the project in order to post information on the dedicated project and MTIT website, and to communicate with the different stakeholders throughout the project's lifecycle.	Arabic and English as needed	Mass/social media communication	Key project updates; Information on project activities;
PAPs, OIPs; public and other stakeholders	-Written information will be disclosed to the public via a variety of communication materials including brochures, flyers, posters, etc. - Website updated regularly.	Arabic and English as needed	Communication materials	- Key project updates and reports on the project's performance. - GRM guidebook/manual

Stakeholder Group	Key Characteristics	Language Needs	Preferred Notification Means / Method	Contents
	- Short video/ Power Point Presentations about the project to be used during meetings.			

#### 4.5. Proposed strategy to incorporate the view of vulnerable groups

The parent project and AF will take special measures to ensure that disadvantaged and vulnerable groups have equal opportunity to access information, provide feedback, or submit grievances. Focus group meetings dedicated specifically to vulnerable groups identified for the sake of the project will also be envisaged as appropriate. As the PIA will also ensure coordination of the project's communications strategy, covering all project components and stakeholders, PIA will ensure that the views of vulnerable groups will be included in the project's communications strategy.

The project is mainly involving vulnerable groups through two main approaches, as the following:

**Project design:** TechStart Innovative business models to support IT services firms and entrepreneurs in their efforts towards access to human capital, market services, finance and outsourcing will have a specific focus on women entrepreneurs. The Project is designed to target women and youth, and the project will make sure that female led businesses are benefitting from the project.

1. The program announcements were designed to refer to women and youth owned/ led business, firms that operate in rural areas, who are encouraged to apply (they are targeted in the application) .
2. The role of women is considered in the project design, where Techstart project has identified 5 out of 17 indicators (about 30%) to ensure the inclusion of women.
3. Additionally, the co financed activities will consider a greater share of co-financing (in the range of an 70/30 match) for eligible women led businesses.
4. Component 1.3 will seek to increase the access of women to IT service companies, including to management and leadership positions. It will achieve this by conducting an assessment of the role of gender in employment in IT services, identifying solutions and policy reforms to promote women's participation in IT sector, and piloting those solutions in the market, and conducting impact assessment of the pilots. Female employment solutions may include childcare options, flexible work, transportation support or other possible mechanisms that would make positions more female-friendly.

5. Moreover, Component 1.4, will consider specific and different needs of women and men which will be integrated into all advisory support provided to firms.

**Communication and outreach:** Young recent graduates especially women suffer from high unemployment related to skill gaps that make access to the job market difficult. Moreover, this group may be subjected to social exclusion and are likely to have reduced opportunities for participation in public engagement and potentially less access to information about grants, and job opportunities. Accordingly, the project will seek to increase the access of those vulnerable groups to IT sector, including to management and leadership positions. The TechStart project will conduct outreach and interactive activities to involve students and recent graduates, through communicating with universities using several tools (events, workshops, campaigns, etc...) to reach this group including women and expose them to TechStat project and further identify their needs and interests. Moreover, Techstart will communicate with relevant CSOs, and associations that empower women entrepreneurship, aiming to access marginalized individuals and firms. Techstart will eventually conduct focus group meetings, to facilitate discussion with these specific vulnerable groups, mainly IT professionals and engineers including young recent graduates and women.

#### 4.6. Proposed strategy for information disclosure

The MTIT website (<http://www.mtit.pna.ps>) is used to disclose project documents including this SEP both in English and Arabic languages. The project implementing agency (PIA) also created a webpage for the project ([www.techstart.ps](http://www.techstart.ps)). All project related documents are disclosed on this webpage. Project updates and information are posted on the website. Details about the project Grievance Redress Mechanism are also posted on the website. An electronic grievance submission form is also made available on PIA/project's website.

In accordance with World Bank Policies, the following documents were disclosed on the World Bank website and MTIT website prior to project approval, and are currently disclosed on the PIA's/ project website as well:

- Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF).
- Stakeholder Engagement Framework and an updated SEP will be disclosed.
- Environmental and Social Commitment Plan (ESCP).
- Labor Management procedures (LMP).

The PIA maintained a frequent and timely disclosure of project information for all events and information sessions on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn), project website ([www.techstart.ps](http://www.techstart.ps)), MTIT website and its social media platforms, and local newspapers (such as program announcements). Information regarding the project GM has been disseminated and continues to be shared in ongoing consultations.

#### 4.7. Timelines

Information on estimated timelines for the parent and AF phases and key decisions is provided below.

Activity	Bank Approval	Start of implementation	Phase out
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<b>Component 1: Improving IT service capabilities</b>	October 2022	February 2023	October 2027
<b>Component 2: Improving the IT services ecosystem</b>	October 2022	August 2023	October 2027
<b>Component 3: Improving market access, and increasing demand and investments</b>	October 2022	TBD	October 2027
<b>Component 4: Project management</b>	October 2022	October 2023	October 2027

PIA shall also undertake a needs assessment for the unemployed young engineers and IT graduates in addition to outreach activities with relevant CSOs/ Universities to further identify the needs and interests of this group. It is expected to conduct these activities during the first quarter of 2023.

#### 4.8 Review of Comments

As explained in more details above, communication and feedback from stakeholders will be taken into consideration at each stage of this project. The PIA plans to have several public meetings with the target population pre-implementation and post implementation to receive reviews and comments.

## 5. Resources and Responsibilities for implementing stakeholder engagement activities

### 5.1. Implementation Resources

PIA mobilized human and material resources to implement the SEP, that is prepared after the specific locations, stakeholder groups, and schedule of activities are known, and developed the Grievance Resolution Mechanism (GRM). Stakeholder engagement activities is led by the PIA. An Environmental and Social Officer is recruited to be mainly responsible for implementing the engagement activities including the AF in coordination with different stakeholders, conducting environmental and social monitoring and reporting.

The material resources that PIA will mobilize, in addition to the ESO, are – (i) a specific area on the project's website; (ii) social media platforms for the project; and (iii) printed documents (manuals, brochures, posters, etc.) that will be used, based on the needs identified.

### 5.2. Roles and responsibilities

In order to implement the various stakeholder engagement activities, the PIA through the ESO will need to closely coordinate with other key stakeholders – other national and private sector entities, MTIT relevant departments, consultants and service providers and PAPs. The roles and responsibilities of these actors/stakeholders are summarized in Table 8.

Table 8: Responsibilities of key stakeholders in the Implementation of Engagement Activities

Actor/Stakeholder	Responsibilities
PIA/ESO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the SEP;</li> <li>• Leading stakeholder engagement activities;</li> <li>• Management and resolution of grievances;</li> <li>• Coordination/supervision of contractors on SEP activities;</li> <li>• Monitoring of and reporting social performance to the World Bank team.</li> </ul>
Service Providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide TA to firms;</li> <li>• Conduct different assessment</li> <li>• Monitoring of engagement activities during the implementation phase.</li> </ul>
Project affected people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invited to engage and ask questions about the Project at Project Meetings and through discussions with the ESO where it is of interest or of relevance to them;</li> <li>• Provide input and feedback on project's activities and implementation plan</li> <li>• Lodge their grievances using the Grievance Redress Mechanism established for the project</li> </ul>

### 5.3. Estimated Budget

The Environment and social Officer (ESO) at the PIA will be in charge for implementing the stakeholder engagement activities including the AF. The budget for the SEP is estimated to be around US\$17,500 included in the costing table (Table 9) under the operational expenses of the project.

The PIA will review the plan every six months to determine if any changes to stakeholder classification or engagement are required. If so, the plan will be updated, and a new revision distributed. The budget will be revised accordingly

Table 9: Estimated budget for stakeholder engagement activities

Activities	Quantity	Unit Cost (USD)	Times/y ears	Total Cost (USD)
<b>Stakeholder Engagement Activities</b>				
Project Launch event	1	5,000	1	5,000
PAPs meetings (virtual)	5	0	1	0
Website development	1	2,000	1	2,000
Communications materials (posters, pamphlets, flyers... including design)	1	1,000	1	1000
Short video	1	2,500	1	2,500
Job fair	1	5,000	1	5,000
Social media (designing and promoting)	LS	LS	LS	2,000
<b>Total - Stakeholder Engagement</b>				<b>17,500</b>

## 6. Grievance Mechanism

## 6.0 Project Redress Grievance Mechanism

A grievance redress mechanism (GRM) is already in place for this project to ensure that PAPs have the access to a viable system to air grievances and to seek resolution with no intimidation or coerciveness. The grievance system is also important for PIA to ensure they are accountable to complaints and that these complaints are handled transparently and efficiently. The GRM system includes complaints related to GBV including Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) and labor related grievances, provided with special referral pathways. A detailed GRM manual that includes guidelines on filing and handling complaints at the project's level is finalized with the support of the World Bank consultant including GBV complaints.

For AF, channels to accept and respond to GBV grievances, while ensuring high confidentiality, will be communicated to the project's affected parties during the consultation meetings and throughout project implementation. Training will also be provided by a GBV expert for the ESO on detection of cases of gender- based violence and handling of inquiries, complaints and grievances related to GBV. The ESO be will responsible for managing this type of complaints with high priority, seriousness, data protection and privacy through channeling the complaint to the Head of PMU and to follow-up on it, in coordination with the DAI Corporate Ethics and Compliance Officer or Director of Safeguarding.

### 6.1. Grievance Process

The complaint, in order to be filed, should be related to the project components and/or to its implementation and management. The Environmental and Social Officer will be assigned to follow up complaints related to the project. The grievance resolution process involves the following main steps:

#### 6.1.1. Receipt of Grievances

Anyone from the affected communities or anyone believing they are affected by the Project can submit a grievance. Complaints shall be filed using one of the following methods:

- Electronically: the complainant files a complaint electronically using the following link on the Techstart website: [www.techstart.ps](http://www.techstart.ps).
- The complainant can also download the Complaints' entry form from the Techstart website, fills it and sends it via email using the following email address: [Techstart.Complaints@dai.com](mailto:Techstart.Complaints@dai.com). Verbally by calling the Complaints Line: the complainant can call the following number +970-2-298 8530 to file a complaint. In person: the complainant files a complaint by filling a form at the Techstart offices in Ramallah at this address: Haifa Building, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, Al-Irsal- Ramallah- Palestine Or in Gaza at this address: Bank of Palestine Building, 8th floor, Gaza. In order to control the risks of virus transmission during Covid-19 pandemic, the complainants will be advised to submit their complaints electronically or via telephone.

Where possible it is desirable that complaints are submitted in writing by the complainant. Should the complainant not wish to comply with this request and submit the complaint verbally, then the complainant information and the details of the complaint should be entered in the GRM log.

The parent project has recorded three project specific grievances. The registered complaints were related to project selection of beneficiaries. In line with the GM manual, all complaints were documented, accepted, resolved and closed within the proposed time frame in the GM



manual. The PIA provided a written respond and full clarification about the selection criteria that was conducted by the technical committee and clear reasons behind the rejections. Two complainants were not satisfied by the responses provided by PIA and escalated their grievances to the Bank.

#### 6.1.2. Procedures for filing the complaints

The complainant fills in the designated form in writing and signs it, or fills it electronically including all personal information and details of the complaint. The complainant encloses all copies of documents that may support the complaint.

The ESO at the PIA will ensure that the form is filled in accurately. The complainant receives a receipt or a confirmation email of acknowledgment with a reference number to track the complaint.

If the complainant choses to file his/her complaint verbally, the ESO must register the complainant information and details of the complaint into the system. The complainant will receive a reference number to track his/her complaint.

#### ***Anonymous Complaints***

The GRM system includes an anonymous complaint reporting process as some complainants may choose to file a complaint anonymously. Channels to accept and respond to anonymous grievances will be communicated to project affected parties during the consultation meetings and throughout project implementation. Anonymous complaints should provide factual details and specific allegations of misconduct or serious wrongdoing related to any of the project activities. The GRM staff shall ask the complainant about the preferable way to inform him/her of the solution.

#### 6.1.3. Registering complaints

The ESO will enter the complaint into the GRM log. The complaints register records the following information:

- Complaint Reference Number
- Date of receipt of complaint
- Name of complainant
- Confirmation that a complaint is acknowledged
- Brief description of Complaint
- Details of internal and external communication
- Action taken: (Including remedies / determinations / result)
- Date of finalization of complaint.
- Original documentation must be kept on file

#### 6.1.4. Referral and Examination of complaints

The ESO will inform the complainant that an investigation is underway within three business days. The complainant shall be informed of the estimated duration for resolving the

complaint, which is no later than ten business days from the date of receipt of the complaint. Where the complaint is unlikely to be resolved within the estimated duration, the ESO must promptly contact the complainant to request additional time and explain the delay. In any event, the complaint must be resolved no later than 30 days from the date of receipt of the complaint. If the complaint is not resolved, the ESO will refer the complaint to the DAI Corporate Ethics & Compliance Manager Or/and the Global Director of Safeguarding to take the appropriate measures.

The ESO will then follow the steps below:

- Verify the validity of the information and documents enclosed.
- Ask the complainant to provide further information if necessary.
- Refer the complaint to the relevant department to conduct field visits for verification, if necessary, and prepare recommendation to the PIA director of actions to be taken and of any corrective measures to avoid possible reoccurrence.
- If the complaint is about GBV, the ESO will refer to DAI Corporate Ethics and Safeguarding Managers to ensure fair and independent investigation of any concerns or complaints. All instigations go through the Ethics & Compliance Manage Or/and the Global Director of Safeguarding for review and next steps.
- The ESO shall register the decision and actions taken in the GRM log.

#### 6.1.5. Notifying the complainant and Closing the complaint

##### **Notifying the complainant**

The ESO shall notify the complainant of the decision/solution/action immediately either in writing, or by calling or sending the complainant a text message. When providing a response to the complainant, the ESO must include the following information:

- A summary of issues raised in the initial complaint;
- Reason for the decision.

##### **Grievance closure or taking further steps if the grievance remains open:**

A complaint is closed in the following cases:

- Where the decision/solution of complaint is accepted by the complainant.
- A Complaint that is not related to the project or any of its components.
- A Complaint that is being heard by the judiciary.
- A complaint that is not substantiated (a false complaint).

##### **Appeals process:**

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of his/her complaint, the ESO shall advise the complainants that if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may re-address the issue to the Minister of MITIT. In case the complainants are not satisfied with the internal procedures for handling complaints, the outcomes of the complaints or for any unhandled complaints, the complainants have right to refer their

complaint to the Cabinet's Unit for grievances. Once all possible redress has been proposed and if the complainant is still not satisfied then they should be advised of their right to legal recourse.

To ensure that the appeal process/escalation mechanism is widely communicated to project beneficiaries, the PIA has and shall continue inform stakeholders during consultation meetings and through a friendly one-page user in Arabic on GM including the escalation mechanism.

#### 6.1.6. Additional Dispute Resolution Scheme

Where the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of his/her complaint, the following procedures shall be considered:

##### **Internal Dispute Resolution Scheme**

The ESO shall advise the complainants that if they are not satisfied with the outcome of their complaint, they may re-address the issue to the Project's Implementing Agency higher management / or DAI Corporate Ethics and Compliance Officer or Director of Safeguarding:

ethics@dai.com, or safeguarding@dai.com

The complainant can at any point during the process or if the complainant did not get a satisfactory resolution register a complaint at World Bank grievance mechanism at [grievances@worldbank.org](mailto:grievances@worldbank.org).

#### 6.2. Feedback/grievance monitoring and recording.

The ESO work regarding complaints resolution is regulated by the Council of Ministers Decision No. (8) of 2016 and by the Procedure Manual No. (20/17) of 2017. Both documents are made public and published in Arabic on the ministries' websites. A detailed GRM manual that includes guidelines on filing and handling complaints at the project's level is finalized with the support of the World Bank consultant including GBV complaints. PIA will keep log for grievances and how complaints were resolved within a stipulated time frame and then produce monthly reports for WB management. Grievances/feedback reports include data on numbers of grievances/feedback received, compliance with business standards, issues raised in grievances/feedback, trends in grievances/feedback over time, the causes of grievances/feedback, whether remedial action was warranted, and what redress was provided.

#### 6.3 Grievance Mechanism for PIA workers (DAI workers)

The PIA direct workers including project managers and supervisors who are assigned to work on this Project are referred to contact the DAI's Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer directly at +1-301-771-7998 or at [ethics@dai.com](mailto:ethics@dai.com). If any employee wishes to remain anonymous, he /she can visit [www.dai.ethicspoint.com](http://www.dai.ethicspoint.com) and choose "To Make a Report.". A hotline number is also provided at +1-503-597-4328. All reports will be reviewed and responded to appropriately.

#### 6.4 Grievance Mechanism for workers at supported firms

Supported companies should develop and establish their own Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) prior to the project launching. Teshstart project is responsible for working with related

companies and assisting them with the implementation of the GRM. The suppliers/benefitting companies will develop and implement workers' grievance mechanism and address the grievance received from their workers.

The suppliers and potential benefiting companies shall provide clear and detailed information on the GRM to workers who will be employed or engaged in connection with the Project during induction phase both verbally and in writing. The workers grievance mechanism will include:

1. Procedure to receive grievances such as comment/complaint form, suggestion boxes, email, and telephone line,
2. Stipulated timeframes to respond to grievances,
3. A register to record and track the timely resolution of grievances, and
4. Responsible office/department to receive, record and track resolution of grievances.
5. Provisions for handling of GBV in the GRM;

### 6.5. World Bank Grievance Redress System

Communities and individuals who believe that they are adversely affected by a project supported by the World Bank may also complaint directly to the Bank through the Bank's Grievance Redress Service (GRS) (<http://projects-beta.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/grievance-redress-service>).

A complaint can be submitted to the Bank GRS through the following channels:

- By email: [grievances@worldbank.org](mailto:grievances@worldbank.org)
- By fax: +1.202.614.7313
- By mail: The World Bank, Grievance Redress Service, MSN MC10-1018, 1818 H Street Northwest, Washington, DC 20433, USA.

### 6.6. MTIT Contact Information

The point of contact regarding grievance management and the local stakeholder engagement activities is the following:

Description	Contact details
Agency:	MTIT
To:	Ms Rania Jaber Naser
Position	Tech Innovation and Entrepreneurship General Director
E-mail:	<a href="mailto:rania.jaber@mtit.pna.ps">rania.jaber@mtit.pna.ps</a>
Website:	<a href="http://www.mtit.pna.ps/">http://www.mtit.pna.ps/</a>
Telephone:	02-2943333/0592777826

## 7. Monitoring and Reporting

### 7.1. Monitoring Reports

#### 7.1.1. During Implementation

Monitoring reports documenting the social performance of the Project during implementation will be prepared by the ESO for submission to PIA and to the World Bank. These reports will include a section regarding stakeholder engagement and grievance management. Table 7-1 proposes a comprehensive set of indicators related to stakeholder engagement performance that can be modified as needed.

#### **Quarterly and Annual Reports by PIA**

During the Project implementation phase, the ESO will prepare brief quarterly reports on social performance for PIA management; these reports will include an update on implementation of the stakeholder engagement activities and include indicators in Table 12. Quarterly reports will be used to develop the annual reports reviewed by PIA director.

#### **Bi-annually E&S Compliance Reports to the World Bank**

Bi-annually reports will be prepared and submitted to the World Bank during the implementation period. A section on stakeholder engagement will be included in these reports, which will include an update on implementation of the stakeholder engagement activities and include indicators in Table 10.

Table 10: Stakeholder Engagement indicators to be documented in progress reports

<b>Engagement with PAPs</b>
Number and location of different meetings with PAPs
Number of men and women that attended each of the meetings above
Minutes of meetings will be annexed to the reports. Summarizing the views and comments of attendees.
<b>Engagement with other stakeholders</b>
Number and nature of engagement activities with other stakeholders, disaggregated by category of stakeholder (Governmental departments, private sector, IT CBOs)
Issues raised by stakeholders, actions agreed with them and status of those actions
Minutes of meetings will be annexed to the six-monthly report
<b>Grievance Redress Mechanism</b>
Number of grievances received from affected people, external stakeholders
Number of grievances that have been (i) filed, (ii) resolved, (iii) closed, and (iv) number of responses that satisfied the complainants, during the reporting period disaggregated by category of grievance, gender, age and location of complainant.
Average time of complaint's resolution process, disaggregated by gender of complainants and categories of complaints.
Trends in time and comparison of number, categories, and location of complaints with previous reporting periods.

### 7.1.2. During Operation and Monitoring

#### **Annual Reports by PIA**

At the end of each year of operation, the ESO will prepare an annual summary report on social performance for for PIA management, which will include an update on implementation of the stakeholder engagement plan and include indicators in Table 7-1.

#### **Bi-annually E&S Compliance Reports to the World Bank**

During operation phase, bi-annually annual social compliance reports will be prepared and submitted to the World Bank. A section on stakeholder engagement will be included in these social compliance reports.

### 7.2. Involvement of stakeholders in monitoring activities

The Project provides several opportunities to stakeholders, especially Project Affected Parties to monitor certain aspects of Project performance and provide feedback. GRM will allow PAPs to submit grievances and other types of feedback. Furthermore, frequent and regular meetings and interactions with the ESO, will allow PAPs and other local stakeholders to be heard and engaged.

### 7.3. Reporting back to stakeholder groups

Reporting to PAPs and other stakeholder groups will be ensured, primarily through meetings with project-affected parties. Feedback received through the GRM will be responded to in writing and verbally, to the extent possible. SMSs and phone calls will be used to respond to stakeholders whose telephone numbers are available. Key Project updates will be posted on project's website. Social media (primarily through the Project Facebook page and a WhatsApp group for PAPs and other stakeholders) will also be used to report back to different stakeholders.

## Annex 1

### Public Consultation Meeting for the Parent Project

#### Minutes of Meeting

**Date:** March 10, 2021

**Time:** 11:00 am to 12:30 pm

**Venue:** Microsoft Teams

**Audience:** Project Beneficiaries in West Bank and Gaza (Entrepreneurs, SMEs, youth and female led businesses,), Ministry of Telecom and Information Technology (MTIT), TechStart team, IPSD team , DAI team, and the World Bank.

On March 10, 2021, the TechStart Project team organized a meeting via Microsoft Teams with representatives of the project beneficiaries. Participants also included the TechStart Project Director, Technical Component Leads, TechStart Environmental and Social Officer, TechStart Communications specialist, and the World Bank Environmental specialist (*full list of participants is below*).

The meeting started by introducing the TechStart project, its objectives, components, and its implementation procedures. The meeting's objective was to present Component 1: Improving IT service capabilities, which aims to strengthen the technological and human capabilities of firms and their workforce through human capital improvement stipends, advisory services on managerial capabilities, IT and gender needs assessment and engagement, and COVID-19 employment support subsidies. The meeting specifically presented and introduced the activities under subcomponent 1.1 Stipends Windows; which included: 1) Internships, 2) On-the-job Training, 3) Expatriate Training and 4) COVID-19 Online Training, along with subcomponent 1.4, COVID-19 employment support subsidy. Moreover, the Environmental and Social Officer explained the Environmental and social Management Framework (ESMF) highlighting on the identified social and environmental risks under TechStart project, and outlined the procedures and mitigation measures implemented by the project to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of TechStart investments. The project's Environmental and Social Officer informed the participants about the GRM system and presented grievances tools and mechanisms for lodging complaints.

The meeting also included a 30-minute Question and Answers to get feedback and hear from the audience. (*full Agenda is below*).

**The meeting proceedings were as follows:**

**Fareeda Diab, TechStart Project Director:** Fareeda introduced Technology for youth and jobs project (Techstart), its objectives and components. She shed the light on the general project objective aiming to improve the economic opportunities for individuals and firms in the West Bank and Gaza (WB&G), and to support early-stage investors, entrepreneurs and business service providers. Fareeda presented the TechStart project's three components under which grants and technical assistance to start-ups and innovative SMEs will be provided. The project has three components: Component 1 as mentioned earlier. Component 2: Improving the IT services ecosystem: Seed grants to catalyze private investment in IT services; Grants for shared R&D centers, Grants for IT business infrastructure (focus on Gaza). Component 3: Improving market access, increasing demand and investments through awareness raising and international market linkages, and Promotion and facilitation of FDI in the Palestinian IT ecosystem.

**Hasan AlAref, TechStart Component 1 Manager:** Hasan presented 2 subcomponents I.1 Stipends Windows, which emphasizes on helping IT firms and startups increase their opportunities to attract new international clients by employing several measures to retain, enhance, and train their employees. Hasan highlighted that this subcomponent would help create a more knowledgeable pool of IT talent in Palestine by providing university students with internship opportunities in IT firms. This pool of new, qualified applicants will be available for the hosting firms and other firms once students graduate. Additionally, Hasan explained that this subcomponent activities will compensate for the shortage in the local market for mid-level management layer and experienced technical team leaders by providing subsidies for hiring expatriates. This subcomponent also includes support for online upskilling of company's staff impacted by the Covid-19 crisis and are not being assigned to client projects anymore. The online upskilling of staff will help companies become more competitive globally when they emerge from the crisis, more resilient during the crisis or be able to reposition themselves to new market segments that are resilient to the crisis. Hasan also explained that subcomponent I.4 will work in tandem with the fourth stipend window, to support the salary of employees who go through the training and transitioning phase.

Hasan pointed out that this public consultation is to interact with our partners and beneficiaries, and that's the reason that we gave 30 minutes to get Questions and hear feedback.

**Mira Stephan, TechStart Environmental and Social Officer:** Mira started welcoming the audience, highlighting on the objective of the Environmental and Social management Framework (ESMF) under TechStart project, which is to function as a guide and directives for the environmental and social requirements under the TechStart project. She highlighted on procedures implemented by the project to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of TechStart investments. She explained a range of suggested measures and plans to reduce, mitigate, and/or offset potential risks. Social and environmental risks have been identified including: discrimination and social exclusion, specifically relating to vulnerable groups; labor and workers' rights; sexual exploitation and abuse / sexual harassment (SEA/SH); and minor environmental impacts such as occupational health and safety risks, and e-waste production. Mira has also pointed out the E&S requirements to be conducted by the project and implemented by the beneficiaries including stakeholder engagement and public consultation for the project activities. Mira also shed the light on the GRM system. During the project's implementation period, it is expected to receive complaints from the project's affected parties. To this end, a system for filing and handling project's complaints is established. She also explained that the GRM system includes special channels to receive the Sexual Harassment and GBV complaints, which will be taken into consideration with the highest level



of confidentiality.

**The 30- minutes of the Q&A section included the following feedback.**

**Questions and Feedback Collected:**

- ITG is ready to absorb up to 30 interns.
- ITG recommends targeting students with GPA lower than 3.0.
- ITG hires interns with the intention of converting to full time employees.
- Rumman asked if they can apply for two or more windows – Answer: yes
- Rumman asked if there is subsidy or support for employees with experience – Answer: no. within project scope, but if you apply, we will guide you to the proper programs that support that.
- Tweet Tech requested training session for the application process to make sure they are not disqualified due to technical issues with application – Answer: we will be cooperative with applicants
- Ibtikar requested clear process and timing of application process.
- Ibtikar requested clarification about details required in the internship training program – Answer: will be provided in future announcements.

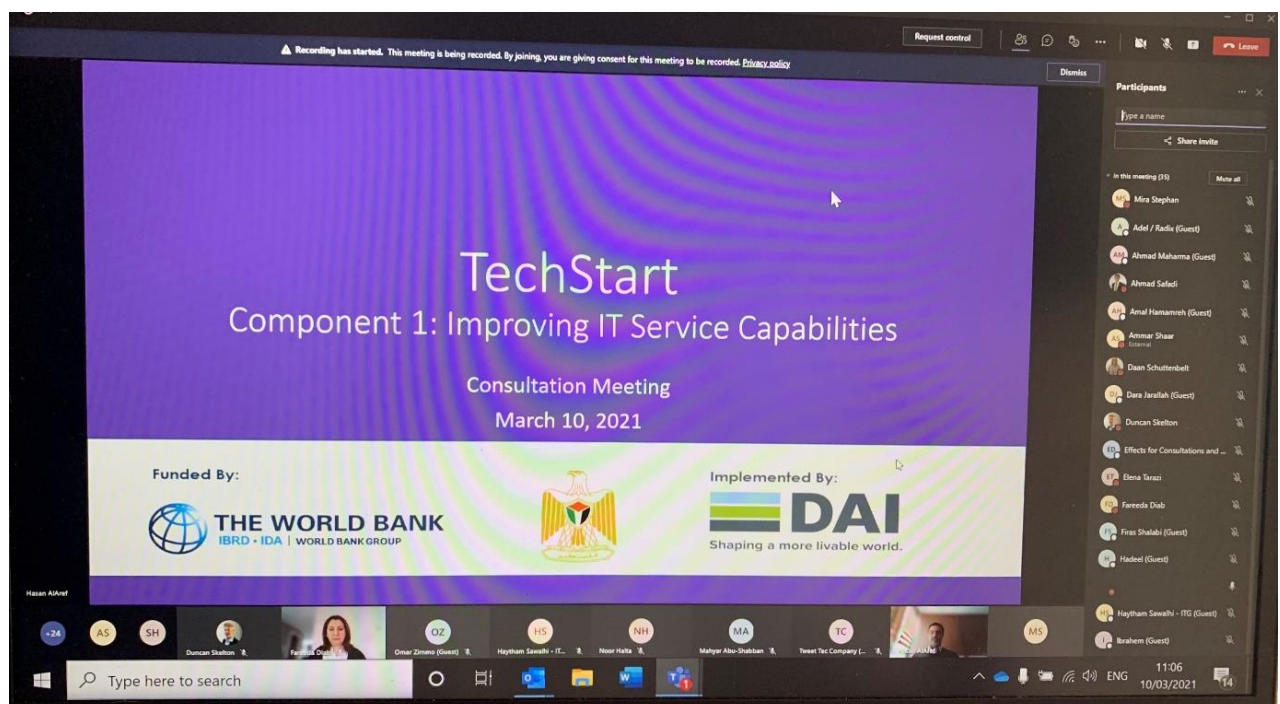
**Participants:**

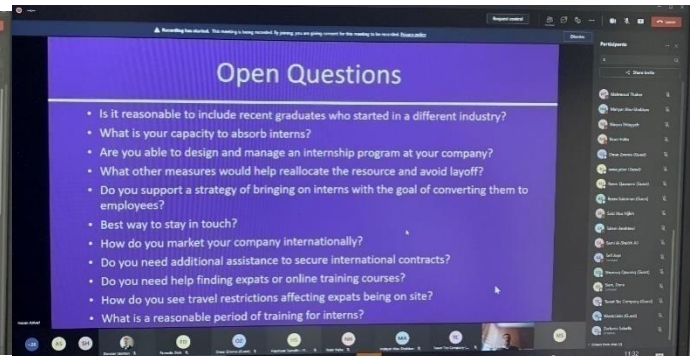
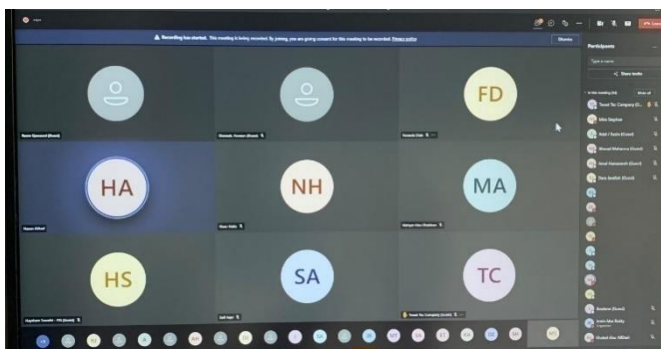
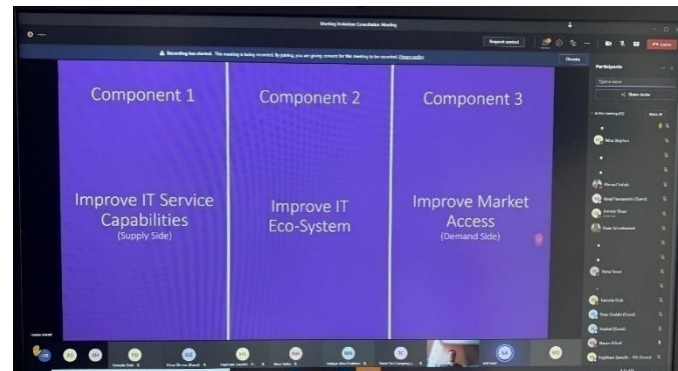
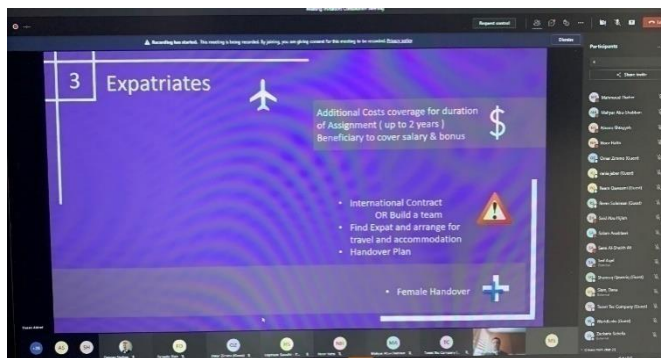
1	Fareeda Diab	TechStart Project
2	Hasan AlAref	TechStart Project
3	Mira Stephan	TechStart / IPSD Project
4	Jenin Abu Rokty	TechStart / IPSD Project
5	Sami Al-Sheikh	Techstart / IPSD Project
6	Saher Abdel Hadi	TechStart
8	Said Abu Hijleh	DAI
9	Elena Tarazi	DAI
10	Lina Fattom	IPSD Project
11	Khaled Abu AlKheir	IPSD Project
12	Mahmoud Thaher	IPSD Project
13	Noor Halta	IPSD Project
14	Ahmad Safadi	IPSD Project
15	Rania Jabeer	MTIT
16	Omar Zimmo,	World Bank
17	Hadeel Ghannam	Kiitos
18	Moin zomlot	Tweet Tec Company / Gaza
19	Haytham Sawalhi,	ITG Software Inc
20	Adel Jodalah	Radix Technologies
21	Ibrahim Houf	Karaaj Bit & Tags
22	Ahmad Maharma Technologies	SMSM Inc.
23	Ammar Shaar	GFA
24	Firas Shalabi	Fratello SW House
25	Dana Siam, Haneen Khateeb,	Dimensions Healthcare
26	Ibrahim Sawalhi	WorldLinks CO. /Gaza
27	Seif Aqel	ASAL Technologies
28	Reem Qawasmi	Ibtikar Fund
29	Dara Jadallah	Exalt Technologies
30	Unknown	Effect for Consultation & Development /Gaza

31	Amal Hamamreh	2bone
32	Shuruq Qawariq	Rumman
33	Reem Suleiman	Foothill Technology Solutions

### Consultation Meeting Agenda

Time	Agenda Item
10:45 – 11:00	<b>Registration</b>
11:00 – 11:10	<b>Opening Speech</b> <b>Fareeda Diab, TechStart Project Director</b>
11:10 – 11:30	<b>Presentation: Improving IT Capabilities Program Overview</b> <b>Hasan AlAref, Component Manager, TechStart</b>
11:30 – 12:00	<b>Discussion</b>
12:00 - 12:10	<b>Presentation: Environmental and Social Management Procedures</b> <b>Mira Stephan, Environmental and Social Management Officer, TechStart</b>
12:10 – 12:30	<b>Questions &amp; Answers</b>





### Information Session – TechStart Project

**Date:** March 2, 2022

**Time:** 12:00 am to 1:30 pm

**Venue:** Virtual via Zoom

**Audience:** Project Beneficiaries in West Bank and Gaza (Entrepreneurs, SMEs, youth and female led businesses.), Ministry of Telecom and Information Technology (MTIT), TechStart team and the World Bank group.

On March 2, 2022, TechStart Project organized an information session via Zoom with representatives of the project beneficiaries. Participants also included the TechStart Project Director, Technical Component Leads, Environmental and Social Officer, TechStart operations' team, and the World Bank group (*full list of participants is below*).

The information session started by introducing the TechStart project, its objectives, components, and its implementation procedures. The meeting's objective was to present sub-component 1.1: Human Capital Improvement Stipends, which included: 1) Internships, 2) Train to hire, 3) On-the-job Training, 4) Expatriates. Moreover, the TechStart Environmental and Social Officer explained the Environmental and social Management Framework (ESMF) highlighting on the identified social and environmental risks under TechStart project and outlined the procedures and mitigation measures implemented by the project to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of TechStart investments. The project's Environmental and Social Officer informed the participants about the GRM system and presented grievances tools and mechanisms for lodging complaints.

The meeting also included Question and Answers section to get feedback and hear from the audience. (*full Agenda is below*).

**The meeting proceedings were as follows:**

**Fareeda Diab, TechStart Project Director:** Fareeda introduced Technology for youth and jobs project (Techstart), its objectives and components. She shed the light on the general project objective aiming to improve the economic opportunities for individuals and firms in the West Bank and Gaza (WB&G), and to support early-stage investors, entrepreneurs and business service providers. Fareeda presented the TechStart project's three components under which grants and technical assistance to start-ups and innovative SMEs will be provided. The project has three components: Component 1 as mentioned earlier. Component 2: Improving the IT services ecosystem: Seed grants to catalyze private investment in IT services; Grants for shared R&D centers, Grants for IT business infrastructure (focus on Gaza). Component 3: Improving market access, increasing demand and investments through awareness raising and international market linkages, and Promotion and facilitation of FDI in the Palestinian IT ecosystem.

**Hasan AlAref, TechStart Component 1 Manager:** Hasan presented subcomponent 1.1 'Stipends Windows', which emphasizes on helping IT firms and startups increase their opportunities to attract new international clients by employing several measures to retain, enhance, and train their employees. Hasan introduced and detailed the goals and objectives of the program, target groups, eligibility and selection criterion, grant amounts and period of coverage. Hasan highlighted that this subcomponent would help create a more knowledgeable pool of IT talent in Palestine by providing university students with internship opportunities in IT firms. This pool of new, qualified applicants will be available for the hosting firms and other firms once students graduate. Additionally, Hasan explained that this subcomponent activities will compensate for the shortage in the local market for mid-level management layer and experienced technical team leaders by providing subsidies for hiring expatriates.

Hasan pointed out that this information session is to interact with our partners and beneficiaries, and that's the reason that Q&A were considered and included.

**Mira Stephan, TechStart Environmental and Social Officer:** Mira highlighted on the objective of the Environmental and Social management Framework (ESMF) under TechStart project. She highlighted on procedures implemented by the project to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of TechStart investments. She explained a range of suggested measures and plans to reduce, mitigate, and/or offset potential risks. Social and environmental risks have been identified including: discrimination and social exclusion, specifically relating to vulnerable groups; labor and workers' rights; sexual exploitation and abuse / sexual harassment (SEA/SH); and minor environmental impacts such as occupational health and safety risks, and e-waste production. Mira also shed the light on the GRM system. During the project's implementation period, it is expected to receive complaints from the project's affected parties. To this end, a system for filing and handling project's complaints is established. She also explained that the GRM system includes special channels to receive the Sexual Harassment and GBV complaints, which will be taken into consideration with the highest level of confidentiality.

**The Q&A section included the following feedback.****Questions and Feedback Collected:****GENERAL:**

- 1. Can the company benefit from the same stipend more than once?**  
Yes, a company can apply again for the same stipend after the first stipend is completed, and there were no issues or problems reported.
- 2. Who is responsible for the recruitment process of trainees/students/expats?**  
It is the responsibility of the applicant company to recruit students/trainees/expats
- 3. When is it expected to get a response from DAI/TechStart after submitting an application?**  
The applicant should hear feedback on their application within 7 weeks, however we will start reviewing applications starting from March 15<sup>th</sup>
- 4. Can the company be registered only at the Ministry of Labor?**  
No, each company should be legally registered, and operating out of the West Bank and Gaza; or in the process of legal registration; or committed to register with Ministry of National Economy in the West Bank
- 5. If the company provides training courses including IT-related training courses like software engineering, programming, coding...etc, is it considered eligible?**  
No, the company should be an IT services company or business service provider working in the technology field in software development, computer programming and consultancy, data processing, hosting or related activities, or mature tech / tech-enabled startups that have some traction in the market and are already generating revenues.
- 6. Are tech companies registered in Jerusalem allowed to apply to the program?**  
Yes, they are eligible to apply as long as they are registered or willing to register with the Ministry of National Economy in the West Bank
- 7. Does the company have to fill the application from scratch if they wish to apply again?**  
If the company wants to apply again after they have been awarded a previous grant under this program, they should contact us at [techstart\\_applications@dai.com](mailto:techstart_applications@dai.com) and we will provide them with instructions on next steps
- 8. Is the company considered eligible if they sell tech products?**  
No, the company should be an IT services company or business service provider working in the technology field in software development, computer programming and consultancy, data processing, hosting or related activities, or mature tech / tech-enabled startups that have some traction in the market and are already generating revenues. Hardware resellers are not eligible.



**9. Can a company submit an application and later add other candidates?**

Yes, the company can add new trainees / students to an already signed agreement. Contact us at [techstart\\_applications@dai.com](mailto:techstart_applications@dai.com) and we will provide you with instructions on next steps

**10. Is the required specialization IT-related only?**

Yes, the (HCIS) program aims to help upgrading the skills of the Palestinian IT service workforce only according to the skill sets explained in Appendix 1 of the overview.

**11. Since the program is valid until 2025, does this mean that if a company intends to benefit from the program for 12 months, it has to apply in 2024?**

The Project will end in October 2025, funding for the stipends will stop before that date, however, calls for last chance to apply will be announced subject to fund. Companies are encouraged to apply when they are ready.

**12. Can a company include a relative such as a niece to benefit from the program support knowing that the trainee has excellent skills that would add value to the company?**

No, beneficiaries shall not be an immediate family members of the owner/manager or an immediate family member of the spouse of the owner/manager of the IT firm. Immediate family members include: spouse, child, niece/nephew, parent, siblings, grandchild, in-laws.

**13. Can training be conducted remotely?**

Generally training should be conducted inside the company, however applicant companies need to justify why the training is needed to be conducted remotely, before a decision of award can be taken.

**14. Is the applicant required to send the personal information for all senior managers or just send the head of departments only?**

We request specific information about the management of the company including CEO and top management.

**STUDENT INTERNSHIPS STIPEND:**

**1. Can students with a diploma degree be selected for the student internships stipend window?** No, this stipend will be available for students in their last 2 years of university studies, who need to gain knowledge and practical skills in mid-level or advanced-level value added IT service.

**2. Is there a minimum number of students required for the Student Internships Stipend Window?**

No, the companies applying to this window are not limited with the number of students they can apply for.

**3. How can students balance between internships and practicing their educational activities?**

The proposed internship is going to be part-time. Time-management should be arranged between the company and the intern.

**4. Is the \$500 paid periodically or for the whole training period?**

Student interns are paid up to \$500 monthly for the duration of the stipend grant.

**5. Should the list of student interns attached in the application include accepted candidates only or also include potential ones?**

The list of interns should include the accepted candidates only. If the company wishes to make any further changes on the list, they should contact DAI/TechStart prior to signing the agreement

**6. What if the intern does not end up getting hired?**

The goal of training is to provide students with valuable experience in order to get hired. If they did not end up getting hired, they will still be qualified candidates for a job in another place.

**7. What is the duration for the Student Internships Stipend?**

The internship period for this stipend can be up to 24 months.

**8. What is the maximum coverage for the Student Internships Stipend?**

The coverage for this stipend can be up to \$500 per intern, including allowance and transportation

**9. Is there a specific age for accepting an intern?**

No, interns just have to be students in their last 2 years of university studies, regardless of age.

**TRAIN-TO-HIRE STIPEND:**

**1. Can we select graduates majoring in business administration but train them in E-commerce?**

No, we only accept graduates with IT-related studies.

**2. Can previous/current employees of the company benefit from the program?**

The employees benefitting from this program must be newly hired, without a current local full-time job. There will be measures to verify that the employees are not current ones.

**3. How many trainees can the company hire for training?**

There is no limit for how many trainees each company can have based on the need of the company, each case will be studied separately, and a decision will be made by DAI/TechStart.

**4. What is the duration for the Train-to-Hire Stipend?**

The training period for this stipend can be up to 6 months.



- 5. What is the percentage of co-financing provided by the beneficiary company?**  
For Train-to-hire Stipend Window, the co-financing percentage will depend on the financial situation of the firm, growth potential, and business proposals. Firms will contribute with 20-50% of trainee remuneration + income tax, benefits. For smaller firms (less than 20 full time employees) and firms that are located in Gaza will benefit from lower co-financing requirements. For women trainees or women-managed companies, the company will need to contribute only 20 percent to 30 percent to the train-to-hire stipend window.
- 6. What is the maximum coverage for the Train-to-Hire Stipend?**  
The coverage for this stipend can be up to \$1200 subject to co-financing criteria and according to proven market value or previous pay history
- 7. Should candidates be fresh graduates?**  
They can be recent IT graduates or previously employed youth that are currently without a job.
- 8. If there is a university student in their last semester, is it possible for a company to apply for them for the Train-to-Hire Stipend?**  
No, they can be considered for the Student Internship Stipend and benefit from it for up to the graduation of the student only. After graduation, they can be considered for the Train-to-Hire Stipend if the company reapplies for this window.
- 9. If there is a university graduate that has not yet received their certificate because of financial problems, can they still be considered for the Train-to-Hire Stipend?**  
Yes, however they need to provide a proof of graduation/completion of their university studies.

#### **ON-THE-JOB TRAINING STIPEND:**

- 1. If the candidate is not a tech-graduate but has experience in IT, can they benefit from the program?**  
If the candidate has relevant experience that would add value to the company, and if the international client approves the selection of the candidate, then DAI/TechStart will study the case and decide accordingly
- 2. Can I hire someone who works in another job if they can work full-time with us?**  
No, the candidates should be working solely for the beneficiary company.
- 3. What is the duration for the On-the-Job Stipend?**  
The training period for the on-the-job stipend can be up to 12 months.
- 4. What is the maximum coverage for the On-the-Job Stipend?**  
This stipend covers the full base salary (excluding income tax) of the employee provided that he is not being paid a salary by the international client. The stipend

amount will be determined based on current market value for position or technical skill, candidate experience, and technology / project complexity

**5. Can companies hire an employee who is currently working at another firm but can quit anytime and join the beneficiary company to benefit from the On-the-Job Training Stipend?**

We encourage companies to hire new unemployed candidates, the goal of the program is to create new employment opportunities in the market and decrease unemployment rates.

**6. Is there a limit on the number of trainees or international clients that we can apply for in this window?**

There is no limit to the number of trainees as long as the international client has approved all of them. Currently, there is a limit of one (1) international client that you can apply to work with. If you want to apply for additional international clients, please contact us at [techstart\\_applications@dai.com](mailto:techstart_applications@dai.com)

**EXPATRIATES STIPEND:**

**1. Are Jerusalem ID holders (Palestinians who live in 1948 regions) considered expatriates?**

Palestinians with Jerusalem IDs and those living in Jerusalem are not considered expats. Candidates with foreign passports (Ex. Israeli nationality) can be considered expatriates if they meet the required eligibility and selection criteria and fulfill the conditions of the stipend window.

**2. What is the duration for the Expatriates Stipend?**

The period for the Expat stipend can be up to 24 months.

**3. What is the maximum coverage for the Expatriates Stipend?**

This stipend does not cover the Expatriate's salary. It will cover Expatriate benefits only, this can include relocation costs, schooling, house allowance, health insurance, hardship allowance etc., with a total value cap equal to 80% of the agreed annual basic salary for the expatriate. The applicant company must fully cover the salary of the expatriate, and any related performance bonuses.

**4. Is the CMO's (Chief Marketing Officer) expatriates covered?**

No, expatriates have to be with tech-related experience.

**5. Does the program cover Visa application expenses?**

No, Visa application expenses for expatriates are not covered.

**6. Can the company appoint an expatriate online?**

No, the expatriate has to be present at the physical location of the company itself throughout the whole contract period.

**7. Are international companies considered expatriates?**

No, expatriates can only be international individuals.

**8. Can the beneficiary company travel abroad to benefit from international experience?**

No, the expatriates have to be brought to the physical location of the beneficiary company.

**9. If the beneficiary company has a branch abroad, can it benefit from the experts in the other branch and consider them expatriates?**

No. The expatriate cannot be an employee of the company.

**10. Is there a limit to the number of Expatriates that we can apply for under this window?**

Currently, there is a limit of one (1) Expatriates that you can apply for under this window. If you need to apply for additional Expatriates, please contact us at [techstart\\_applications@dai.com](mailto:techstart_applications@dai.com)

**Participants:**

Topic	Webinar ID	Actual Start Time	Actual Duration (minutes)	# Registered	# Cancelled	Unique Viewers	Total Users
Information Session - Human Capital Improvement Stipends (HCIS)	944 4864 0756	Mar 2, 2022 11:24 AM	151	171	1	98	163

Panelist Details	
Attended	User Name (Original Name)
Yes	daromarkevin@gmail.com
Yes	Mira Stephan
Yes	Iyad Jabr
Yes	Leen El-Far
Yes	Fareeda Diab

Attendee Details	
Attended	User Name (Original Name)
Yes	moin zomlot
Yes	Iulia Cojocaru
Yes	Zack Sabella
Yes	Khaldoun Mafarjeh
Yes	Bisher Dikeidek
Yes	Azza Arafat
Yes	Wassef Masri
Yes	Ayman Arandi
Yes	Lina Fattom
Yes	Amany Dahir
Yes	Salam Anabtawi

Yes	Israa Hamoudeh
Yes	Sami Al Sheikh Ali
Yes	nihad Taha
Yes	Alyazan Alyazouri
Yes	Mohammed Noman
Yes	Furas Shalabi
Yes	firas shalabi
Yes	Haya Samaana
Yes	Sudqi Salaymeh
Yes	Tamer shurrab
Yes	Amany Mosameh
Yes	Sajed Foqahaa
Yes	Jihad Mahfouz
Yes	Anas Shehadeh
Yes	Fadi Qanoo
Yes	Ahmed Alron
Yes	Salma Rajabi
Yes	Yousef Elhallaq
Yes	Ahmed Almadhoun
Yes	yara hato
Yes	Mohammed AlBanna
Yes	Mohannad Zalloom
Yes	Amal kronz
Yes	OMAR RAYAN
Yes	Iyad Ayoub
Yes	Abdulghafar Shabaneh
Yes	Ali Dreidi
Yes	Samer Abu Aisha
Yes	Moustafa Daloull
Yes	Ayah Besaiso
Yes	Eyad Al-Araj
Yes	Jacob Lennheden
Yes	Leen Jamal
Yes	Rakan Abbasi
Yes	reema azzam
Yes	Megan Tannous
Yes	Abdelrahman Sayara
Yes	Mohammed Elabsi
Yes	Thaer Ayasi
Yes	Marwan Khanfar
Yes	Abedelkareem Zidan
Yes	Abeer AbuGhaith
Yes	Rehab Hamdan
Yes	khalil saleem
Yes	Halima AbeedELAzeez
Yes	Hamza Hamad

Yes	Mahmoud Barham
Yes	Hashem Ramadan
Yes	Mahyar Hatim abu shaaban
Yes	Maysoun Ibrahim
Yes	Khaled Abu Baker
Yes	Faisal Kilani
Yes	Jaser Maali
Yes	Meqdad Darwish
Yes	Daoud G
Yes	Saher Abdulhadi
Yes	Maisaa Shallah
Yes	mahdi - experts
Yes	Hásan AlAref
Yes	Ameen Dawabsheh
Yes	Fareeda D
Yes	Bassam Awartani
Yes	امينة محمد هاشم جادالله
Yes	Kathrine Nicolaisen
Yes	rania jaber
Yes	Leen Elfar
Yes	Iyad Jabr
Yes	Fireflies.ai Notetaker
Yes	Bashar Gharabeh
Yes	Dara Jarallah
Yes	Khader Rami
Yes	Rami Khader
Yes	Ashraf Alyazouri
Yes	Adel Jodalah
Yes	Hassan Jaddeh
Yes	Ahmad Abdelhalim
Yes	Mohammad Abdelkareem
Yes	Somaya Rajabi
Yes	Rozana Saleem
Yes	Nawal Abusultan
Yes	Ahmad Salameh
Yes	Shadi Abdel Hadi
Yes	Salah Amleh
Yes	Ahmad Tamimi
Yes	rawan saad
Yes	Mahyar AbuShaaban
Yes	jakleen mohmed
Yes	Dana Siam
Yes	Sara Nofal

**Information Session Agenda**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Agenda Item</b>
11:45 – 12:00	<b>Registration</b>
12:00 – 12:10	<b>Welcome and Introduction</b> Hasan AlAref, Program Manager - Improving IT Service Capabilities, TechStar
12:10 – 12:20	<b>Welcome and Overview of TechStart</b> Fareeda Diab, TechStart Project Director
12:20 -1:30	<b>Presentation: Improving IT Capabilities Program Overview</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction (10 min)</li> <li>• Student Internships + QA (20 min)</li> <li>• Train-to-Hire + QA (20 min)</li> <li>• On-the-job training + QA (20 min)</li> <li>• Expatriates + QA (<b>20 min</b>)</li> </ul> Hasan AlAref, Program Manager - Improving IT Service Capabilities, TechStar
1:30 – 1:40	<b>Presentation: Environmental and Social Management Procedures</b> Mira Stephan, Environmental and Social Officer, TechStart

- **Information session recording:**

Below is the link for the recorded information session (2/3/2022):

[https://zoom.us/rec/play/BzZKIbodiKfce\\_hxruTiu2okByY23-dvfCdysopHVv-LaJwd0y\\_X4xG5GuHVLihKm1vtur8ZJAUXEGF.rckefr\\_Ojs-eS8oo?autoplay=true&continueMode=true&startTime=1646215732000&fbclid=IwAR3CKhe\\_IeT156x1bkdd3ViBCHR-qbpSAGlXovRu-VhiJx9z1-ua8X8HsQ](https://zoom.us/rec/play/BzZKIbodiKfce_hxruTiu2okByY23-dvfCdysopHVv-LaJwd0y_X4xG5GuHVLihKm1vtur8ZJAUXEGF.rckefr_Ojs-eS8oo?autoplay=true&continueMode=true&startTime=1646215732000&fbclid=IwAR3CKhe_IeT156x1bkdd3ViBCHR-qbpSAGlXovRu-VhiJx9z1-ua8X8HsQ)

### **Gaza Tech and Innovative Recovery Program Launch**

#### **Minutes of Meeting**

**Date:** July 12, 2021

**Time:** 12:00 am to 1:15 pm

**Venue:** Microsoft Teams

**Audience:** Program Beneficiaries in Gaza (Entrepreneurs, SMEs, youth, female led businesses), Ministry of National Economy (MoNE), Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology (MTIT), Palestinian IT and support organizations (PITA and PICTI, BTI, UCTAS, Gaza Sky Geeks, IPSD and Techstart team and World Bank Group).

On July 12, 2021, the IPSD and Techstart Projects launched the joint program “Gaza Tech and Innovative Recovery Program” with the participation of representatives from the Ministry of National Economy and the Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology. The program aims to provide urgent financial support to Palestinian tech and tech-enabled companies that have been damaged partially or fully by the recent war on Gaza to enable them to recover from the great losses to their business operations and infrastructure. The event was held virtually via Teams with representatives of the project stakeholders, and around 41 people attended the event (full list of participants is below).

The meeting started by a welcoming note by Nour Haltah (Business Registry & Home-Based Businesses Reform Programs Manager at IPSD project and the session moderator), followed by an opening speech by Suha Awadallah (General Manager of International Relations at the MoNE) and Rania Jaber (General Manager of the Technology Innovation Center at the MTIT). The Gaza Tech and Innovative Recovery program was introduced and presented by Hasan Alaref (Manager of Improving IT service capabilities program at Techstart project). Next, the Environmental and Social Officer Mira Stephan explained the Environmental and social Management safeguards highlighting on the identified social and environmental risks under the program, and outlined the procedures and mitigation measures implemented by the project to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of IPSD and Techstart investments. The project’s Environmental and Social Officer informed the participants about the GRM system and presented grievances tools and mechanisms for lodging complaints.

The meeting also included a 30-minute Question and Answers to get feedback and hear from the audience. *(full Agenda is below).*

**The meeting proceedings were as follows:**

**Nour Halta, Business Registry & Home-Based Businesses Reform Programs Manager at IPSD project):** Mrs. Nour Haltah started the event with an opening and welcoming speech.

**Suha Awadallah, General Manager of International Relations at the MoNE**

**Rania Jaber, General Manager of the Technology Innovation Center at the MTIT**

Mrs. Suha and Mrs Rania started the event with a welcoming speech, referring to the joint efforts of the Ministry of National Economy (MoNE), and the Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology (MTIT), and acknowledged the World Bank for their noteworthy fund and the DAI as the implementing agency, who all worked together to implement and launch this vital recovery program. They also highlighted that the joint program aims to provide urgent financial support to Palestinian IT services firms, tech and tech-enabled companies that have been damaged partially or fully by the recent war on Gaza to enable them to recover from the great losses to their business operations and infrastructure. Accordingly, the World Bank aims to support these companies who need immediate support to replace what is lost and help them resume their business operations as soon as possible.

**Hasan Alaref, Manager of Improving IT service capabilities program at Techstart project):**

Mr. Hasan provided the audience with an overview about Techstart and IPSD projects; their goals, objectives, components and target groups, followed by a detailed introductory presentation about Gaza Tech and Innovative Recovery Program. Hasan highlighted that this joint program aims to provide urgent financial support to Palestinian tech and tech-enabled companies that have been damaged partially or fully by the recent war on Gaza, and he introduced the goals and objectives of the program, target groups, eligibility and selection criterion, grant coverage and eligible expenditures. Hasan also highlighted that this program offers assistance in the form of in-kind grants to cover employees' salaries, workspace rental, in addition to replacing essential furniture, equipment and systems (software and hardware) to resume operations.

**Mira Stephan, IPSD Environmental and Social Officer:** Mira highlighted on the objective of the Environmental and Social Management safeguards under the program. She highlighted on procedures implemented by the projects to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of IPSD and Techstart investments. She explained a range of suggested measures and plans to reduce, mitigate, and/or offset identified E&S risks. Mira also shed the light on the GRM system. During the project's implementation period, it is expected to receive complaints from the project's affected parties. To this end, a system for filing and handling project's complaints is established. She also explained that the GRM system includes special channels to receive the Sexual Harassment and GBV complaints, which will be taken into consideration with the highest level of confidentiality.

**Closing Remarks**

Mrs. Nour Haltah closed the session.



**Question and Answers and feedback from the audience:****1. Is the meeting recording going to be made available to the public?**

Yes, the meeting recording will be shared with the public, as well as the presentation

**2. How can we register for the program support?**

You submit your application at the following link  
[https://fs20.formsite.com/DAIForms/84dic8wvaf/form\\_login.html](https://fs20.formsite.com/DAIForms/84dic8wvaf/form_login.html)

**3. Does the program cover replacement only of furniture and equipment? Does it require to provide proof that the items existed for it to be covered and replaced under the program support?**

Yes. The program requires proof that you owned the damaged items, and that they were part of your business operations in order for it to be covered under the program support and replaced.

**4. Does the program cover companies that were affected the 2014 war on Gaza?**

No, This program is designed specifically for the companies that were affected by the war events in May of 2021 only.

**5. For equipment that were lost or damaged during the recent war, how can it be replaced?**

The program will procure the replacement equipment, for any items that qualify based on program conditions, on behalf of the beneficiary company.

**6. Is the company allowed to apply to all 4 items of the support (Rent, Salaries, Furniture, Equipment) or is it limited to only 1?**

Companies can apply to all 4 items of the support, and based on the documentation and proofs provided, the company may receive support for all 4 items, but up to the limit of \$100,000 per company for all 4 items combined

**7. Are industrial companies eligible to apply?**

Industrial companies are not eligible to apply according to the projects' environmental and social guidelines, however, the program supports tech and tech-enabled companies across different sectors. For more information, please visit [ipsd.ps](http://ipsd.ps) and / or [techstart.ps](http://techstart.ps)

**8. Does the program cover employees who work outside of Palestine?**

The program does not impose restrictions on location of employees. A valid employment contract between the company and the employee is required to qualify

for the salary support. Consultants are not considered employees of the company, and therefore are not covered under this support

**9. Must the damage sustained by the company be physical damage only? Are other damages, like suspension of operations and delay of delivery of supplies be considered damage?**

Please include all damages that you believe your company has sustained due to the recent war on Gaza, and provide the requested documentation, and we will evaluate your request based on the selection criteria. There are other programs that you may be qualified for if you did not sustain physical damage from the war. For more information, please visit [ipsd.ps](http://ipsd.ps) or / and [techstart.ps](http://techstart.ps)

**10. What is the disbursement mechanism for this support?**

Salaries will be paid directly to the employees. Rent will be paid directly to the landlord. No payments will be made to the company as re-imbursements or stipends.

For furniture and equipment, the program will procure the items, and pay the vendors directly.

**11. I have lost a contract due to the war. Can I apply?**

Please include all damages that you believe your company has sustained due to the recent war on Gaza, and provide the requested documentation, and we will evaluate your request based on the selection criteria. There are other programs that you may be qualified for if you did not sustain physical damage from the war. For more information, please visit [ipsd.ps](http://ipsd.ps) or / and [techstart.ps](http://techstart.ps)

**12. I am part of PICTI, do I still need to register?**

Yes, registration with the Ministry of National Economy is a mandatory requirement for this program.

**13. I have already purchased replacement for damaged furniture. Can the program reimburse me for the invoice amount?**

NO, the program does not provide reimbursement. However, please submit your application and describe the damages and the actions already taken to recover along with the proofs, and you may qualify for the other windows of support within the program.

**14. Is registration done in the company's name? or owners' names?**

Yes, the program requires company registration with the Ministry of National Economy, not the owners' registration.

**15. Must the company have a contract with the employee prior to May 10, 2021?**

Yes, for employees to qualify for salary support, they must have contracts signed prior to May 10, 2021.

**16. When is the program expected to launch? If we benefited from previous programs, will it affect our chances of benefitting from this program?**

The program is live now, and you can submit your applications today. Benefitting from previous programs does **NOT** affect your chances of benefitting from this program.

**17. We had to suspend some employees due to the war. Does the support include re-hiring them?**

The program supports salaries of current employees only. As long as you have valid contracts for the employees signed prior to May 10, 2021, then they can qualify for salary support under this program.

**18. Do you accept applications for startups which pay salary for founders only?**

Please include all damages that you believe your company has sustained due to the recent war on Gaza, and provide the requested documentation, and we will evaluate your request based on the selection criteria. For more information, please visit [ipsd.ps](http://ipsd.ps) or / and [techstart.ps](http://techstart.ps)

**19. Most of companies believe registration is of no value at all, and is only an additional cost, with no guarantee that we will receive support from the program**

Registration is a mandatory requirement for this program. If you are already registered in Gaza or in WB, this is sufficient. If you are not registered yet, you will have to register in WB with Ministry of National Economy. IPSD will assist qualified companies in all aspects of registration, which may also include registration fees.

**20. Can Gaza companies register in West Bank? Or should they register in Gaza?**

If you are already registered in Gaza or in WB, this is sufficient. If you are not registered yet, you will have to register in WB with Ministry of National Economy.

**21. Is the health insurance required to be qualified for the program support?**

No. The Environmental and Social Management Framework / Manual requires workers' injuries insurance.

**22. Does the program cover registration fees?**

No. The program does not cover registration fees for companies as part of the support windows. However, IPSD, which is one of the two projects offering this program, can assist companies in the registration process and fees.

### 23. What is the deadline to submit an application?

The deadline is August 20, 2021, 11:59pm

### Agenda

<b>12:00 - 12:15</b>	<b>Opening Speech</b> Suha Awadallah General Manager of International Relations at the MoNE Rania Jaber General Manager of the Technology Innovation Center at the MTIT
<b>12:15 - 12:30</b>	<b>Introduction of Gaza Tech and Innovative Recovery Program</b> Hasan Alaref Manager of Improving IT service capabilities program at Techstart project
<b>12:30 – 12:40</b>	<b>Environmental and Social Safeguards</b> Mira Stephan IPSD and TechStart Environmental and Social Officer
<b>12:40 – 1:15</b>	<b>Open Discussion – Q&amp;A</b>
<b>1:15 – 1:20</b>	<b>Closing Remarks</b>

### Attendees List

Name	Firm	Email
Nihad	Taha	nihad@smeportals.com
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AMRO	QAUD	



**Media Coverage and online presence:**

The launch of the program and call for applications were promoted through different channels including the official project's websites: [www.ipsd.ps](http://www.ipsd.ps) and [www.techstart.ps](http://www.techstart.ps) where also all related information such as the program overview and FAQs and the application form are available for public. In addition, the program was promoted through social media pages (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) of TechStart and IPSD.

An event page was created on Facebook as a public invite for the information session. The related posts of the program were shared by the partner's pages including MoNE, MTIT in addition to sharing the information on different platforms that support the ecosystem including Palgeeks, Palestine Startups and Palestine Foras.

- **Information session recording:**

Below is the link for the recorded information session (12/7/2021):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=5FICGsDiEKg&feature=youtu.be>

- **Newspaper announcement:**

Below is the link for the announcement on the newspaper that was published in 11/07/2021 in both Al Quds and Al -Ayyam newspapers:

<https://www.al-ayyam.ps/pdfs/2021/07/11/p04.pdf>

<https://alquds.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Al-Quds-11-07-2021.pdf>

- **Local Media Coverage of the press release:**

<http://wafa.ps/Pages/Details/27737>

<https://alquds.com/2021/07/13/%d8%a5%d8%b7%d9%84%d8%a7%d9%82-%d8%a8%d8%b1%d9%86%d8%a7%d9%85%d8%ac-%d8%af%d8%b9%d9%85-%d8%aa%d8%b9%d8%a7%d9%81%d9%8a-%d8%a7%d9%84%d8%aa%d9%83%d9%86%d9%88%d9%84%d9%88%d8%ac%d9%8a%d8%a7-%d9%88%d8%a7/>

<https://www.alwatanvoice.com/arabic/news/2021/07/14/1423565.html>

<https://www.al-ayyam.ps/pdfs/2021/07/14/all/all.pdf>

<https://alquds.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Al-Quds-14-07-2021.pdf>

<https://www.maannews.net/news/2045158.html>

[http://www.alhaya.ps/ar\\_page.php?id=6bd4134y113066292Y6bd4134](http://www.alhaya.ps/ar_page.php?id=6bd4134y113066292Y6bd4134)

<https://www.aliqtisadi.ps/article/82350/%D8%A5%D8%B7%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%82-%D8%A8%D8%B1%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%85%D8%AC-%D8%AF%D8%B9%D9%85-%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%81%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%86%D9%88%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A7/>

[%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%83%D9%86%D9%88%D9%84%D9%88%D8%AC%D9%8A%D8%A7-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A8%D8%AA%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D9%81%D9%8A-%D9%82%D8%B7%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%BA%D8%B2%D8%A9-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%B4%D8%B1%D9%83%D8%A7%D8%AA-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%85%D8%AA%D8%B6%D8%B1%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%AC%D8%B1%D8%A7%D8%A1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AD%D8%B1%D8%A8-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A3%D8%AE%D9%8A%D8%B1%D8%A9](#)



### COVID-19 Support Program Program Launch

#### Minutes of Meeting

**Date:** August 2, 2021

**Time:** 12:00 am to 1:15 pm

**Venue:** Microsoft Teams

**Audience:** Program Beneficiaries in West Bank and Gaza (Entrepreneurs, SMEs, youth, female-led businesses), Ministry of National Economy (MoNE), Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology (MTIT), Palestinian IT and support organizations in addition to IPSD and Techstart team and World Bank Group.

On August 2, 2021, the IPSD and Techstart Projects launched the joint program “COVID-19 Support Program” with the participation of representatives from the Ministry of National Economy and the Ministry of Telecommunication and Information Technology. The program aims to provide financial support to Palestinian companies struggling through the current COVID-19 pandemic. The event was held virtually via Teams with representatives of the project stakeholders, and 41 people attended the event (full list of participants is below).

The meeting started by a welcoming note by Hasan Alaref (Manager of Improving IT service capabilities program at Techstart project and the session moderator). The COVID-19 Support program was introduced and presented by Nour Haltah (Business Registry & Home-Based Businesses Reform Programs Manager at IPSD project). Next, the Environmental and Social Officer Mira Stephan explained the Environmental and social Management safeguards highlighting on the identified social and environmental risks under the program, and outlined the procedures and mitigation measures implemented by the project to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of IPSD and Techstart investments. The project’s Environmental and Social Officer informed the participants about the GRM system and presented grievances tools and mechanisms for lodging complaints.

The meeting also included a 30-minute Question and Answers to get feedback and hear from the audience. *(full Agenda is below).*

**The meeting proceedings were as follows:**

**Hasan Alaref, Manager of Improving IT service capabilities program at Techstart project and session moderator):** Mr. Hasan Alaref started the event with an opening and welcoming speech.

**Nour Halta, Business Registry & Home-Based Businesses Reform Programs Manager at IPSD project):** Mrs. Nour provided the audience with an overview about Techstart and IPSD projects; their goals, objectives, components and target groups, followed by a detailed introductory presentation about COVID-19 Support Program. Nour highlighted that this joint program aims to provide financial support to Palestinian companies struggling through the current COVID-19 pandemic, and she introduced the goals and objectives of the program, target groups, eligibility and selection criterion, grant coverage and eligible expenditures. Nour also highlighted that IPSD and TechStart are providing a business assistance intervention, which is a combination of financial support (grants) and non-financial support (Training, technical assistance) to enable companies to withstand and adapt through the continuing Covid-19 effects. The financial support will be in the form of an In-Kind Grant covering up to four (4) months of salaries per beneficiary firm.

**Mira Stephan, IPSD Environmental and Social Officer:** Mira highlighted on the objective of the Environmental and Social Management safeguards under the program. She highlighted on procedures implemented by the projects to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of IPSD and Techstart investments. She explained a range of suggested measures and plans to reduce, mitigate, and/or offset identified E&S risks. Mira also shed the light on the GRM system. During the project's implementation period, it is expected to receive complaints from the project's affected parties. To this end, a system for filing and handling project's complaints is established. She also explained that the GRM system includes special channels to receive the Sexual Harassment and GBV complaints, which will be taken into consideration with the highest level of confidentiality.

**Closing Remarks**

Mr. Hasan Alaref closed the session.

**Questions and Answers and feedback from the audience:**

1. Does the grant cover newly hired employees?  
Yes, as long as the employment contracts for the employees that support is requested for are signed before submission of the application.
2. We have female ownership or females as members of the Board of Directors for the company, does this mean we get 80% coverage on all salaries?  
Women owners must have an active role in the company. You must clarify the role of women in order to qualify for the 80% coverage.

3. Is there a limit to the number of employees whose salaries can be covered under this program?  
No, there is no limit on the number of employees you can apply for, but there is a limit on the total grant amount that you can benefit from, which is \$50,000 per company, regardless of the number of employees.
4. Is there a limit to the number of companies that can benefit from this program?  
No. We encourage you to apply as soon as possible, as the program support is first comes first served and is only limited by the fund availability.
5. We are not registered in the MoNE, but we have a tax file, and are registered with the Ministry of Labor. Can we apply?  
Yes, you can apply. However, you must be legally registered before you sign the grant agreement and benefit from the program
6. My company is in Gaza, and already registered with the Ministry in Gaza, is this enough?  
Yes, if you are legally registered in Gaza or in the West Bank you meet the eligibility.

## Agenda

<b>12:00 - 12:10</b>	<b>Welcoming note</b> Hasan Alaref Manager of Improving IT service capabilities program at Techstart project
<b>12:10 - 12:30</b>	<b>Introduction of COVID-19 Support Program Program</b> <b>Nour Haltah</b> Business Registry & Home-Based Businesses Reform Programs Manager at IPSD project
<b>12:30 – 12:40</b>	<b>Environmental and Social Safeguards</b> Mira Stephan IPSD and TechStart Environmental and Social Officer
<b>12:40 – 1:15</b>	<b>Open Discussion – Q&amp;A</b>
<b>1:15 – 1:20</b>	<b>Closing Remarks</b>

## Attendees List

Iyad	Nabtiti
abdallah	taweel
mohammed	majed
Zaher	Aldohdar
mohammed	elmadhoun
Hiam	qasem
Majdal Shams Shadi Sadi Al Ayassa	
Abuheiba	

Jamal	Alkhalili
Khaldoun	Mafarjeh
Eman	Said
Shadi	Baker
Ramez	Saqqa
yara	hato
Hamzeh	Ghosheh
Jehad	Atyani
Fadi	Bakeer
Iyad	Ayoub
Fadi	Abed
Hafeth	Zughayer
Maher	Saleh
Rassem	Mushtaha
Abdul aziz	Alayed
Ihab	Al marajda
Emad	Sawalhy
laila	jamous
Ashraf	Bader
Odai	Abu Baker
Dr. Riyad	Jaddal
moin	zomlot
riad	abo rock
Ahmad	Saheb
Yousef	El Hallaq
Jihad	Shojaeha
Suzan	Attallah
Basem	Al-Akal
ashraf	demaidd
Raed	Altoom
Sudqi	Salaymeh

Yousef

Alyazji

Imad

Al tatari





### Media Coverage and online presence:

The launch of the program and call for applications were promoted through different channels including the official project's websites: [www.ipsd.ps](http://www.ipsd.ps) and [www.techstart.ps](http://www.techstart.ps) where also all related information such as the program overview and FAQs and the application form are available for public. In addition, the program was promoted through social media pages (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn) of TechStart and IPSD.

An event page was created on Facebook as a public invite for the information session. The related posts of the program were shared by the partner's pages including MoNE, MTIT in addition to sharing the information on different platforms that support the ecosystem including Palgeeks, Palestine Startups and Palestine Foras.

### Information session recording:

Below is the link for the recorded information session (2/8/2021):

<https://youtu.be/0Ik3GH58kWo>

### Newspaper announcement:

Below is the link for the announcement on the newspaper that was published in both Al Quds and Al -Ayyam newspapers:

<https://alquds.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Al-Quds-28-07-2021.pdf>

<https://www.al-ayyam.ps/pdfs/2021/07/28/all/all.pdf>

### Public Consultation Meeting – TechStart Project

**Date:** March 10, 2021

**Time:** 11:00 am to 12:30 pm

**Venue:** Microsoft Teams

**Audience:** Project Beneficiaries in West Bank and Gaza (Entrepreneurs, SMEs, youth and female led businesses,), Ministry of Telecom and Information Technology (MTIT), TechStart team, IPSD team , DAL team, and the World Bank.

On March 10, 2021, the TechStart Project team organized a meeting via Microsoft Teams with representatives of the project beneficiaries. Participants also included the TechStart Project Director, Technical Component Leads, TechStart Environmental and Social Officer, TechStart Communications specialist, and the World Bank Environmental specialist (*full list of participants is below*).

The meeting started by introducing the TechStart project, its objectives, components, and its implementation procedures. The meeting's objective was to present Component 1: Improving IT service capabilities, which aims to strengthen the technological and human capabilities of firms and their workforce through human capital improvement stipends, advisory services on managerial capabilities, IT and gender needs assessment and engagement, and COVID-19 employment support subsidies. The meeting specifically presented and introduced the activities under subcomponent 1.1 Stipends Windows; which included: 1) Internships, 2) On-the-job Training, 3) Expatriate Training and 4) COVID-19 Online Training, along with subcomponent 1.4, COVID-19 employment support subsidy. Moreover, the TechStart Environmental and Social Officer explained the Environmental and social Management Framework (ESMF) highlighting on the identified social and environmental risks under TechStart project, and outlined the procedures and mitigation measures implemented by the project to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of TechStart investments. The project's Environmental and Social Officer informed the participants about the GRM system and presented grievances tools and mechanisms for lodging complaints.

The meeting also included a 30-minute Question and Answers to get feedback and hear from the audience. (*full Agenda is below*).

**The meeting proceedings were as follows:**

**Fareeda Diab, TechStart Project Director:** Fareeda introduced Technology for youth and jobs project (Techstart), its objectives and components. She shed the light on the general project objective aiming to improve the economic opportunities for individuals and firms in the West Bank and Gaza (WB&G), and to support early-stage investors, entrepreneurs and business service providers. Fareeda presented the TechStart project's three components under which grants and technical assistance to start-ups and innovative SMEs will be provided. The project has three components: Component 1 as mentioned earlier. Component 2: Improving the IT services ecosystem: Seed grants to catalyze private investment in IT services; Grants for shared R&D centers, Grants for IT business infrastructure (focus on Gaza). Component 3: Improving market access, increasing demand and investments through awareness raising and international market linkages, and Promotion and facilitation of FDI in the Palestinian IT ecosystem.

**Hasan AlAref, TechStart Component 1 Manager:** Hasan presented 2 subcomponents I.1 Stipends Windows, which emphasizes on helping IT firms and startups increase their opportunities to attract new international clients by employing several measures to retain, enhance, and train their employees. Hasan highlighted that this subcomponent would help create a more knowledgeable pool of IT talent in Palestine by providing university students with internship opportunities in IT firms. This pool of new, qualified applicants will be available for the hosting firms and other firms once students graduate. Additionally, Hasan explained that this subcomponent activities will compensate for the shortage in the local market for mid-level management layer and experienced technical team leaders by providing subsidies for hiring expatriates. This subcomponent also includes support for online upskilling of company's staff impacted by the Covid-19 crisis and are not being assigned to client projects anymore. The online upskilling of staff will help companies become more competitive globally when they emerge from the crisis, more resilient during the crisis or be able to reposition themselves to new market segments that are resilient to the crisis. Hasan also explained that subcomponent I.4 will work in tandem with the fourth stipend window, to support the salary of employees who go through the training and transitioning phase.

Hasan pointed out that this public consultation is to interact with our partners and beneficiaries, and that's the reason that we gave 30 minutes to get Questions and hear feedback.

**Mira Stephan, TechStart Environmental and Social Officer:** Mira started welcoming the audience, highlighting on the objective of the Environmental and Social management Framework (ESMF) under TechStart project, which is to function as a guide and directives for the environmental and social requirements under the TechStart project. She highlighted on procedures implemented by the project to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of TechStart investments. She explained a range of suggested measures and plans to reduce, mitigate, and/or offset potential risks. Social and environmental risks have been identified including: discrimination and social exclusion, specifically relating to vulnerable groups; labor and workers' rights; sexual exploitation and abuse / sexual harassment (SEA/SH); and minor environmental impacts such as occupational health and safety risks, and e-waste production. Mira has also pointed out the E&S requirements to be conducted by the project and implemented by the beneficiaries including stakeholder engagement and public consultation for the project activities.

Mira also shed the light on the GRM system. During the project's implementation period, it is expected to receive complaints from the project's affected parties. To this end, a system



for filing and handling project's complaints is established. She also explained that the GRM system includes special channels to receive the Sexual Harassment and GBV complaints, which will be taken into consideration with the highest level of confidentiality.

**The 30- minutes of the Q&A section included the following feedback.**

**Questions and Feedback Collected:**

- ITG is ready to absorb up to 30 interns.
- ITG recommends to target students with GPA lower than 3.0.
- ITG hires interns with the intention of converting to full time employees.
- Rumman asked if they can apply for 2 or more windows – Answer: yes
- Rumman asked if there is subsidy or support for employees with experience – Answer: no. within project scope, but if you apply we will guide you to the proper programs that support that.
- Tweet Tech requested training session for the application process to make sure they are not disqualified due to technical issues with application – Answer: we will be cooperative with applicants
- Ibtikar requested clear process and timing of application process.
- Ibtikar requested clarification about details required in the internship training program – Answer: will be provided in future announcements.

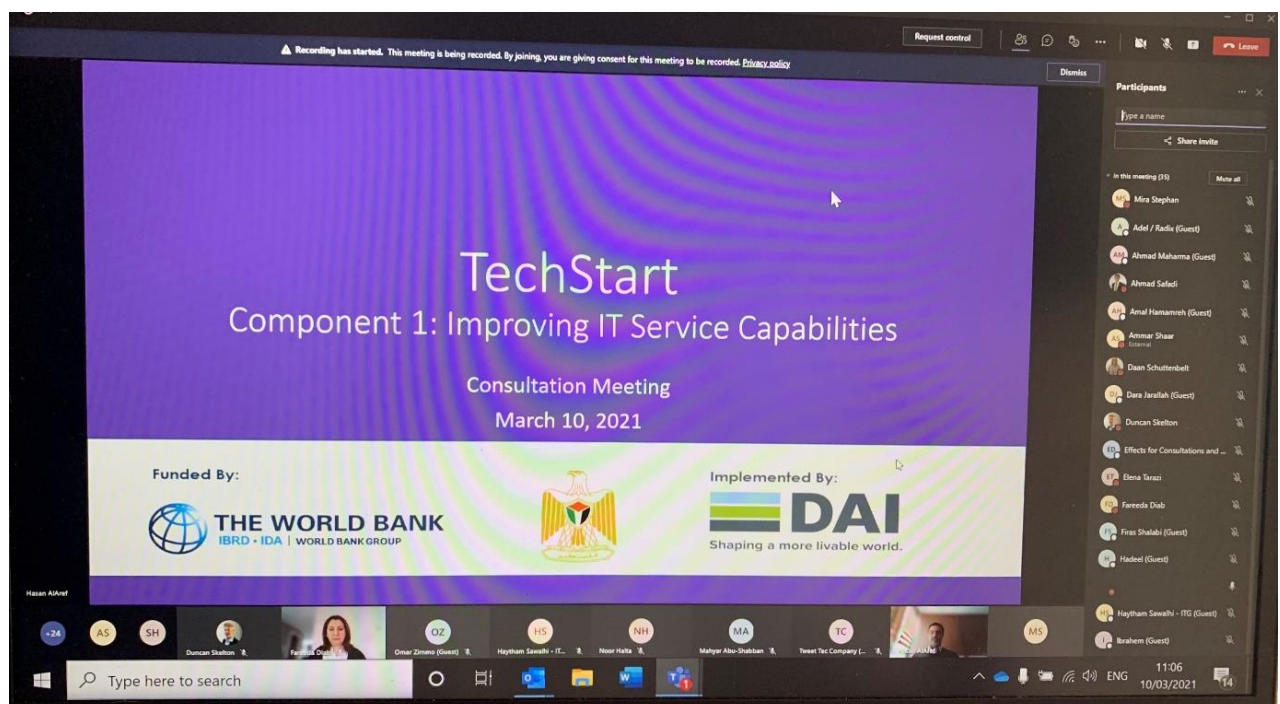
**Participants:**

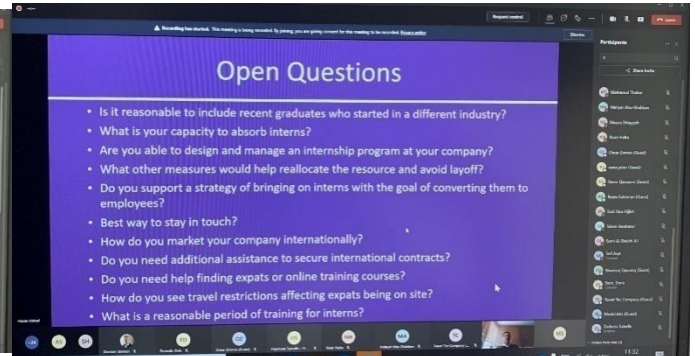
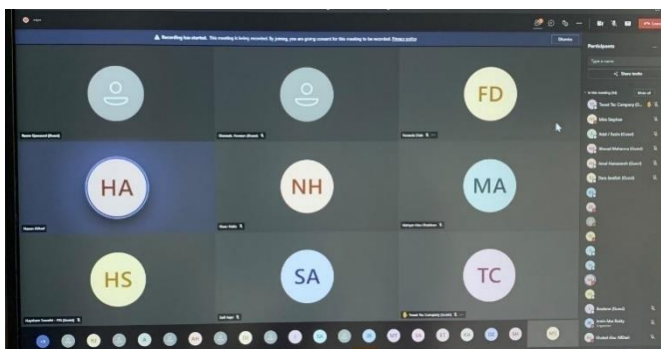
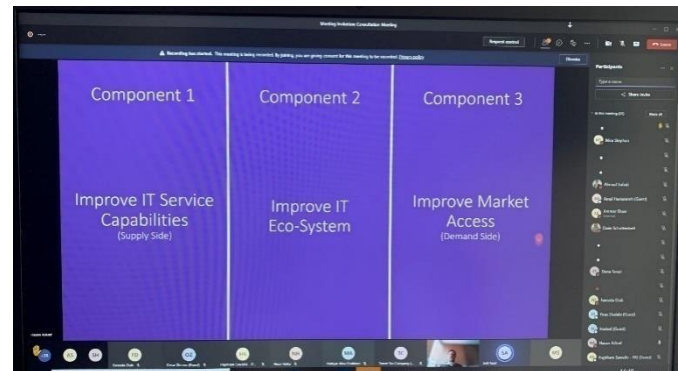
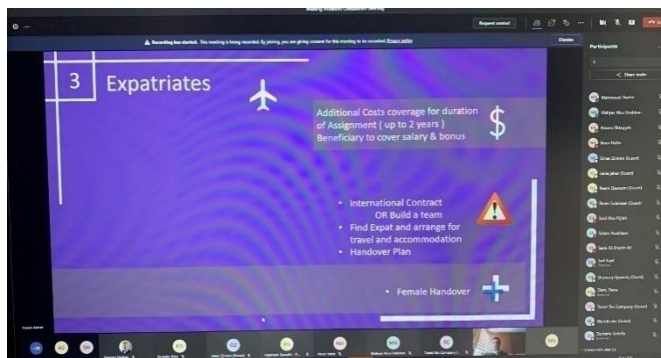
1	Fareeda Diab	TechStart Project
2	Hasan AlAref	TechStart Project
3	Mira Stephan	TechStart / IPSD Project
4	Jenin Abu Rokty	TechStart / IPSD Project
5	Sami Al-Sheikh	Techstart / IPSD Project
6	Saher Abdel Hadi	TechStart
8	Said Abu Hijleh	DAI
9	Elena Tarazi	DAI
10	Lina Fattom	IPSD Project
11	Khaled Abu AlKheir	IPSD Project
12	Mahmoud Thaher	IPSD Project
13	Noor Halta	IPSD Project
14	Ahmad Safadi	IPSD Project
15	Rania Jabeer	MTIT
16	Omar Zimmo,	World Bank
17	Hadeel Ghannam	Kiitos
18	Moin zomlot	Tweet Tec Company / Gaza
19	Haytham Sawalhi,	ITG Software Inc
20	Adel Jodalah	Radix Technologies
21	Ibrahim Houf	Karaaj Bit & Tags
22	Ahmad Maharma Technologies	SMSM Inc.
23	Ammar Shaar	GFA
24	Firas Shalabi	Fratello SW House
25	Dana Siam, Haneen Khateeb,	Dimensions Healthcare
26	Ibrahim Sawalhi	WorldLinks CO. /Gaza
27	Seif Aqel	ASAL Technologies
28	Reem Qawasmi	Ibtikar Fund

29	Dara Jadallah	Exalt Technologies
30	Unknown	Effect for Consultation & Development /Gaza
31	2bone	Amal Hamamreh
32	Rumman	Shuruq Qawariq
33	Foothill Technology Solutions	Reem Suleiman

### Consultation Meeting Agenda

Time	Agenda Item
10:45 – 11:00	<b>Registration</b>
11:00 – 11:10	<b>Opening Speech</b> <b>Fareeda Diab, TechStart Project Director</b>
11:10 – 11:30	<b>Presentation: Improving IT Capabilities Program Overview</b> <b>Hasan AlAref, Component Manager, TechStart</b>
11:30 – 12:00	<b>Discussion</b>
12:00 - 12:10	<b>Presentation: Environmental and Social Management Procedures</b> <b>Mira Stephan, Environmental and Social Management Officer, TechStart</b>
12:10 – 12:30	<b>Questions &amp; Answers</b>





### **Information Session – HCIS Program Minutes of Meeting**

**Date:** August 18, 2022

**Time:** 12:00 am to 1:30 pm

**Venue:** Virtual via Zoom

**Audience:** Project Beneficiaries in West Bank and Gaza (Entrepreneurs, SMEs, youth and female led businesses,), Ministry of Telecom and Information Technology (MTIT), TechStart team and the World Bank group.

On August 18, 2022, TechStart Project held the second information session - under the Human Capital Improvement Stipends programs - via Zoom with representatives of the project beneficiaries. Participants also included the TechStart Project Director, Technical Component Leads, Environmental and Social Officer, TechStart operations' team, and the World Bank group (full list of participants is below).

The information session started by introducing the TechStart project, its objectives, components, and its implementation procedures. The meeting's objective was to present sub-component 1.1: Human Capital Improvement Stipends, which included: 1) Internships, 2) Train to hire, 3) On-the-job Training, 4) Expatriates. Moreover, the TechStart Environmental and Social Officer explained the Environmental and social Management Framework (ESMF) highlighting on the identified social and environmental risks under TechStart project and outlined the procedures and mitigation measures implemented by the project to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of TechStart investments. The project's Environmental and Social Officer informed the participants about the GRM system and presented grievances tools and mechanisms for lodging complaints.

The meeting also included Question and Answers section to get feedback and hear from the audience. *(full Agenda is below).*

**The meeting proceedings were as follows:**

**Hasan AlAref, TechStart Component I Manager:** Hasan introduced Technology for youth and jobs project (Techstart), its objectives and components. Hasan shed the light on the general project objective aiming to improve the economic opportunities for individuals and firms in the West Bank and Gaza (WB&G), and to support early-stage investors, entrepreneurs and business service providers. Fareeda presented the TechStart project's three components under which grants and technical assistance to start-ups and innovative SMEs will be provided. The project has three components: Component I as mentioned earlier. Component 2: Improving the IT services ecosystem: Seed grants to catalyze private investment in IT services; Grants for shared R&D centers, Grants for IT business infrastructure (focus on Gaza). Component 3: Improving market access, increasing demand and investments through awareness raising and international market linkages, and Promotion and facilitation of FDI in the Palestinian IT ecosystem.

Hasan presented subcomponent I.I 'Stipends Windows', which emphasizes on helping IT firms and startups increase their opportunities to attract new international clients by employing several measures to retain, enhance, and train their employees. Hasan introduced and detailed the goals and objectives of the program, target groups, eligibility and selection criterion, grant amounts and period of coverage. Hasan highlighted that this subcomponent would help create a more knowledgeable pool of IT talent in Palestine by providing university students with internship opportunities in IT firms. This pool of new, qualified applicants will be available for the hosting firms and other firms once students graduate. Additionally, Hasan explained that this subcomponent activities will compensate for the shortage in the local market for mid-level management layer and experienced technical team leaders by providing subsidies for hiring expatriates.

Hasan pointed out that this information session is to interact with our partners and beneficiaries, and that's the reason that Q&A were considered and included.

**Mira Stephan, TechStart Environmental and Social Officer:** Mira highlighted on the objective of the Environmental and Social management Framework (ESMF) under TechStart project. She highlighted on procedures implemented by the project to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of TechStart investments. She explained a range of suggested measures and plans to reduce, mitigate, and/or offset potential risks. Social and environmental risks have been identified including: discrimination and social exclusion, specifically relating to vulnerable groups; labor and workers' rights; sexual exploitation and abuse / sexual harassment (SEA/SH); and minor environmental impacts such as occupational health and safety risks, and e-waste production. Mira also shed the light on the GM system. During the project's implementation period, it is expected to receive complaints from the project's affected parties. To this end, a system for filing and handling project's complaints is established. She also explained that the GM system includes special channels to receive the Sexual Harassment and GBV complaints, which will be taken into consideration with the highest level of confidentiality.

**Participants:**

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### Information Session Agenda

Time	Agenda Item
11:45 – 12:00	<b>Registration</b>
12:00 – 12:10	<b>Welcome and Overview of TechStart</b>
12:20 -1:20	<p>Hasan AlAref, Program Manager - Improving IT Service Capabilities, TechStart</p> <p><b>Presentation: Improving IT Capabilities Program Overview</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction</li> <li>• Student Internships + QA</li> <li>• Train-to-Hire + QA</li> <li>• On-the-job training + QA</li> <li>• Expatriates + QA</li> </ul> <p>Hasan AlAref, Program Manager - Improving IT Service Capabilities, TechStart</p>
1:20 – 1:30	<p><b>Presentation: Environmental and Social Management Procedures</b></p> <p>Mira Stephan, Environmental and Social Officer, TechStart</p>

- **Information session recording:**

Below is the link for the recoded information session (10 August 2022):

[https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/e6dc9EEKU689y8XfFrVbh7jyfYtbbHlzN5cK80xYUJVNDBwAKNCrRr4FhivG8vvmorRpvurbQG-0W\\_Pt9.n9zQNY\\_aZtWjlkus?startTime=1660121737000&xzm\\_rtaid=Xz5oDuZkRAeo3FEiARqAPQ.1666088385034.6469d3d12203cae74f0a28a8d93ae7e6&xzm\\_rtaid=976](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/e6dc9EEKU689y8XfFrVbh7jyfYtbbHlzN5cK80xYUJVNDBwAKNCrRr4FhivG8vvmorRpvurbQG-0W_Pt9.n9zQNY_aZtWjlkus?startTime=1660121737000&xzm_rtaid=Xz5oDuZkRAeo3FEiARqAPQ.1666088385034.6469d3d12203cae74f0a28a8d93ae7e6&xzm_rtaid=976)



HCIS Overview &amp; application process - Shared screen with speaker view

## Potential E&S risks

Mira Stephan

- Social Risks
  - Labor and workers' rights and poor working conditions.
  - Discrimination and social exclusion, GBV, specifically relating to vulnerable groups;
  - Exposure to sexual exploitation and abuse / sexual harassment (SEA/SH);
  - Exposure to COVID-19.
- Environmental Risks
  - E-waste production.

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HCIS Overview &amp; application process - Shared screen with speaker view

## Objective of the ESMF

Mira Stephan

Environmental and Social Safeguards aims:

- To ensure that project activities are designed and implemented in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner, using best practices.

01:16:35 / 01:37:34 Speed



HCIS Overview &amp; application process - Shared screen with speaker view

**3 On the Job Training**

**Summary & QA**

- Business Registration Certificate / Commitment Letter
- Financial records
- List of shareholders / owners and copy of their IDs
- Management resumes including CEO / top managers
- Business Plan
- Management Resumes including CEO / top managers
- Signed LOI by international client
- Copy of trainees' CVs and IDs
- List of trainees and all requested information
- Agreed training plan with international client
- Signed commitment letter to sign full-time contract with trainees for the duration of the stipend

Up to 12 months

100% of base salary  
The stipend amount will be determined depending on current market value for position or technical skill, candidate experience, and technology / project complexity.

1. Firms should provide evidence that they have growth potential and a commercially sound business plan, including company vision, workforce expansion plan and can showcase the use of the resource in their business development activities.
2. The company has experienced and complementary leadership and a management team with the right skills and personal strengths.

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HCIS Overview &amp; application process - Shared screen with speaker view

**Summary & QA**

- Business Registration Certificate / Commitment Letter
- Financial records
- List of shareholders / owners and copy of their IDs
- Management resumes including CEO / top managers
- Business Plan
- Management Resumes including CEO / top managers
- Training plan for trainees
- Copy of trainees' CVs and IDs
- List of trainees and all requested information
- Signed commitment letter to sign full-time contract with trainees for the duration of the stipend

Up to 6 months

Up to \$1,200  
70% of base salary

Female Trainees  
Female Management  
Gaza  
Small Size

80% of base salary

**Train to hire**

1. Firms should provide evidence they have growth potential and a commercially sound business plan, including company vision, workforce expansion plan and can showcase the use of the trainees in their business development activities.
2. The company has experienced and complementary leadership and a management team with the right skills and

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HCIS Overview &amp; application process - Shared screen with speaker view



# TechStart

## Human Capital Improvement Stipends

Information Session  
August 10, 2022

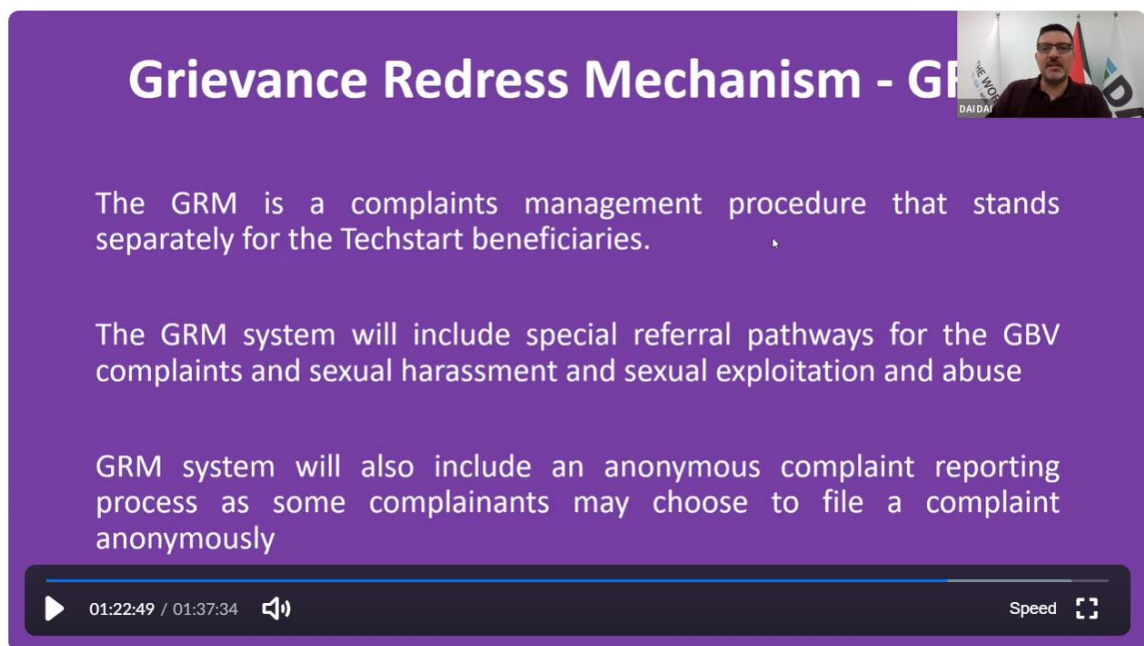
Funded By:  **THE WORLD BANK**

Implemented By:  **DAI**

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HCIS Overview &amp; application process - Shared screen with speaker view





# Grievance Redress Mechanism - GRM

The GRM is a complaints management procedure that stands separately for the Techstart beneficiaries.

The GRM system will include special referral pathways for the GBV complaints and sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse

GRM system will also include an anonymous complaint reporting process as some complainants may choose to file a complaint anonymously

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## Annex 2

### Public Consultation Meeting for the Additional Financing

#### **Additional Financing and Pioneer Program Launch session Minutes of Meeting**

**Date:** October 26, 2022

**Time:** 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm

**Venue:** Virtual via Zoom

**Audience:** Project Beneficiaries in West Bank and Gaza (Entrepreneurs, SMEs, youth and female led businesses,), Ministry of Telecom and Information Technology (MTIT), Palestinian IT organizations (PITA, PICTI), TechStart team and the World Bank group.

On October 26, 2022, TechStart Project held a consultation meeting for the launch of Improving the IT Service Ecosystem Program “Pioneer” - via Zoom with representatives of the project beneficiaries. Participants also included the TechStart Project Director, Technical Component Leads, Environmental and Social Officer, TechStart operations’ team, and the World Bank group (full list of participants is below).

The information session started by introducing the TechStart project, its objectives, components, and its implementation procedures. The session highlighted on the additional financing obtained from the Dutch and the SWISS governments and the EU, implemented by DAI. The meeting’s objective was to present Pioneer Program. The main objective of the PIONEER program (market name for Component 2) is to strengthen competitiveness of the Palestinian IT sector through financing initial costs for establishment in West Bank and Gaza of: (a) new business operations in the IT sector; (b) new commercial IT training providers; (c) new commercial human resources (HR) service providers for IT sector. Moreover, the TechStart Environmental and Social Officer explained the Environmental and social Management Framework (ESMF) highlighting on the identified social and environmental risks under TechStart project and outlined the procedures and mitigation measures implemented by the project to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of TechStart investments. The project’s Environmental and Social Officer informed the participants about the GRM system and presented grievances tools and mechanisms for lodging complaints.

The meeting also included Question and Answers section to get feedback and hear from the audience. *(full Agenda is below).*



**The meeting proceedings were as follows:**

**Salam Anabtawi, TechStart Component 2 Manager:** Salam introduced Technology for youth and jobs project (Techstart), its objectives and components. Salam shed the light on the general project objective aiming to improve the economic opportunities for individuals and firms in the West Bank and Gaza (WB&G), and to support early-stage investors, entrepreneurs and business service providers. Salam presented the TechStart project's three components under which grants and technical assistance to start-ups and innovative SMEs will be provided. The project has three components: Component 1: Improving IT Service Capabilities. Component 2: Improving the IT services ecosystem: Seed grants to catalyze private investment in IT services; Grants for shared R&D centers, Grants for IT business infrastructure (focus on Gaza). Component 3: Improving market access, increasing demand and investments through awareness raising and international market linkages, and Promotion and facilitation of FDI in the Palestinian IT ecosystem.

Salam presented the Pioneer grant window: 1) New IT Service Operations, 2) New IT training Service providers, 3) New HR Service Providers for IT sector, 4) Upgrading IT Business Infrastructure. Salam introduced and detailed the goals and objectives of each window, target groups, eligibility and selection criterion, grant amounts and period of coverage. Salam highlighted that this PIONEER program will provide matching grants to new West Bank and Gaza business establishments that increase global competitiveness by building new capabilities in the local IT ecosystem.

Salam pointed out that this information session is to interact with our partners and beneficiaries, and that's the reason that Q&A were considered and included.

**Mira Stephan, TechStart Environmental and Social Officer:** Mira highlighted on the objective of the Environmental and Social management Framework (ESMF) under TechStart project. She highlighted on procedures implemented by the project to assess, manage, and monitor anticipated environmental and social impacts of TechStart investments. She explained a range of suggested measures and plans to reduce, mitigate, and/or offset potential risks. Social and environmental risks have been identified including: discrimination and social exclusion, specifically relating to vulnerable groups; labor and workers' rights; sexual exploitation and abuse / sexual harassment (SEA/SH); and minor environmental impacts such as occupational health and safety risks, and e-waste production. Mira also shed the light on the GM system. During the project's implementation period, it is expected to receive complaints from the project's affected parties. To this end, a system for filing and handling project's complaints is established. She also explained that the GM system includes special channels to receive the Sexual Harassment and GBV complaints, which will be taken into consideration with the highest level of confidentiality.



**Participants:**

First Name	Last Name	Organization
Israa	Hamoudeh	Asal Technologies
Ayham	Bader	Tamkeen
AlaaEddin	Almabhouh	AHD Technology
Nihad	Taha	Pal Life
Nihad	Taha	
Sonia	Abosoud	GFA
Osama	Eshteivi	CODEPRESS It solutions
Andreja	Marusic	World Bank
Ashraf	Bader	INCUBE
hadeel	Ghannam	Kiitos
Zackaria	Sabella	World Bank
Mohammed	Noman	DAI
Hind	Harb	Palestine Information and Communications Technology Incubator (PCTI)
Isaac	Abu Owda	Motion Way
Moutaz	Mushtaha	Netstream
Adel	Ewaida	AI-ADNALUS SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT
Adel	Ewaida	
ahmed	alron	AccessLine
Moneer	Al-Qato	BIT
Denise	Habash	Anera
moin	zomlot	Tweet Tec Company
Reem	Suleiman	Foothill Technology Solutions
Ruba	Hamayel	ERPMax
Yousef	Sabbah	QOU
Sundus	Hytham	ERPMax
Sundus	Hytham	
Tareq	Abufayad	Agri Medic
Khaled	Baker	Digital Communication Company Ltd
Mohammed	Humaid	Newline tech Company
Mohammed	Humaid	Newline Tech Company
Eman Said	Abu Tabanjh	Netstream
Sulaiman	Attari	Headway Academy for Training and Development
Rassem	Mushtaha	Modern Tech Corp. (MTC)

Odai	Abu Baker	DotLine
Salah	Ahmed	Avatar Information Technology
Seif	Aqel	Asal Technologies
Mahyar	Abu Shaaban	DAI - TechStart Gaza Team
Yazan	Mohammad	ActiMena
Anas	Shehadeh	Technopal
Bakeer	Rayyes	Bakierrayyes
Bakeer	Rayyes	
ABDELRAHMAN	SAYARA	Buthor
Tamer&Mohanad	Shurrab	IT
Tamer&Mohanad	Shurrab	
Khalil	Saleem	Developers Plus
Ahmed	Elhalaby	Awtar Tech
Ahmed	Elhalaby	
Mohammed	Elabsi	TS2G
Fadi	Qanoo	Deli technology
Fadi	Qanoo	
Hazem	Tirhi	NA
Qamar	Attallah	Paltour
Qamar	Attallah	
Mahmoud	Salamain	palestine
Gabor	Toth	World Bank
Majdi	Haj Khalil	Edevin Ltd
Ahmed	Yasin	D Z
Ahmed	Yasin	
Rozan	Khazendar	Rozza Designs
Jafar	Shunnar	TAP/Kiitos
Ahmed	Ali	Palestine
Yousef	Elhallaq	Gaza Sky Geeks
yara	alhato	speedclick for it and telecom
Dr. Riyad	Jaddal	Go Global
Qutaybah	Khwayrah	Pillars Technologies
Hiam	qasem	go global for general consulting
Ahmed	Fattouh	Doroob Technologies
atyaf	co	atyaf.co
Basem	Al-Aqel	SCOPE Systems
Jamil	Khatib	IBTECAR
Firas	Shalabi	Fratello SW House
Firas	Shalabi	
Amany	Dahir	DAI
Samer	Abu Aisha	Smartek IT Services
Iyad	Jabr	TechStart
Noor	Halta	DAI
mohammed	fsifes	HEXA

Haytham	Sawalhi	ITG Software Engineering
Nahed	Eid	Effects for Consultation and Development
Samar	Ayesh	Blue for Information Technology
Mai	Faleet	MENA Alliances
Mai	Faleet	
Abdallah	Abu Ajamieh	DAI
		NEXTLEVEL TECHNOLOGY SYSTEMS- NTS
Rand	Barham	
yazan	hammoudeh	scope systems
Lana	Abu Aqel	WePRO
Ghassan	Jamal	SDC
Ghassan	Jamal	
Ahmed	Almadhoun	Mysem
jihad	mahfouz	Myasem
Sudqi	Salaymeh	AHL Logics
Rima	Naser	Crossrealms
Ayman	Arandi	Iris Solutions
mais	helou	AURA
mais	helou	
Azza	Arafat	CrossRealms
Azza	Arafat	
amro	zaqout	Newsolutions Co
		ALTARIQ Systems & Projects
Tarek	Eslim	
		Utopia for Training & IT Solutions
Rana	El husseini	
Mahmoud	Abu Ghosh	TooPOPTech
Mahmoud	Abu Ghosh	
		Quality Assurance Technology - Golden-QA
Walid	Kassab	
Amal	Atallah	Nepras Company
Ismail	Anbar	RINT Solutions
		Tap-Kittos Technologies
Huda	El Jack	
Mohannad	Zalloom	Synergy
AbdelRahman	Awad	Clever Toys
Jodie	Winston	DAI
Ameed	Awad	Digital Dots
		Creativity for digital marketing
Rasha	Alawar	
Hany	Srour	Golden QA
Rana	Qutteineh	JEST
		TAQAT for Business solutions
Mohammed	Agha	

Ninaru	Shtayyeh	IPSD
Ninaru	Shtayyeh	
Test	Test	Dai
Iyad	Ayoub	Aura
saher	abdulhadi	DAI
Hiba	Tamimi	Provision
Sarah	Abdallah	Anera
Christian	Vezjak	TAP
Laila	Jamous	Iris Solutions
Laila	Jamous	
Abeer	Saadeh	Finbloom _ Financial solutions management
Amani	Abed	SkillZad
Lina	Fattom	DAI- IPSD
Alaa	Alhourany	Clever toys
Saleem	Alagha	SkillZad
Abed	Khooli	MTIT
Iulia	Cojocararu	World Bank
Amani	Muady	PITA
juhaina	Ziadeh	Oyoun Media
Zahraa	Shabana	AHL Logics
Ameen	Dawabsheh	DAI
israa	shwahna	Qq

### Information Session Agenda

Time	Agenda Item
13:00- 13:05	Registration
13:05 – 13:15	<b>Welcome and Overview of TechStart</b> <b>Salam Anabtawi, Program Manager - Improving the IT Ecosystem Program, TechStart</b>
13:15- 2:00	<b>Presentation: Overview of the Pioneer program</b> <b>Eligibility and selection criteria</b> <b>Application process</b> <b>Salam Anabtawi- Program Manager - Improving IT Service Capabilities, TechStart</b>
2:00 – 2:15	<b>Presentation: Environmental and Social Management Procedures</b> <b>Mira Stephan, Environmental and Social Officer, TechStart</b>
2:15-2:30	<b>Q&amp;A plus feedback</b>

**Feedback obtained from participants:****Has any assessment been done to confirm how many companies with technical specialization such as data science could be eligible for this program?**

Yes, the World Bank has done an extensive study of the market before introducing the Pioneer program in order to open the opportunity for the establishment and development of companies in the field of data science and others.

**If a company located in Gaza but is registered in Ramallah, does it need to be registered in Gaza as well?**

As long as the company is registered under the Ministry of National Economy and meets the other eligibility criteria, it is considered eligible to apply for the program.

**Can the international partner be an NGO, or it has to be a private company?**

The international partner has to be a company specialized in the field. For example, an advanced technical training company or a company specialized in human resources in the field of technologies with experience in the same field globally.

**Is it possible to consider solar energy as part of the grant support?**

No, according to the program's ESMF guidelines, TechStart does not support this item.

**Can a company apply for multiple windows?**

No, each company can apply to one window only concurrently.

**When is the submission deadline?**

There is no deadline. Companies can apply anytime throughout the program's lifetime subject to fund availability.

**Are companies that work in the R&D field eligible for this program?**

If the company is in the field of IT and meets the eligibility and selection criteria, then it can apply, and their application will be assessed by DAI/TechStart.

**If the company is a current/previous beneficiary of other DAI projects, are they still eligible to apply for the PIONEER program?**

We encourage eligible applicants to submit their application regarding if they benefited previously or not, noting that the program will not support activities that have been supported previously by other programs.

**New IT Services Operations Window FAQs:****Are salaries considered as operational expenses?**

Labour costs (salaries) and fees associated with delivery/on-going execution of core business functions are covered under this grant window and can be covered on the condition that evidence is provided, and compliance requirements are met.

**New IT Training Service Providers Window FAQs:**

**What is meant by target threshold in the New IT Training Service Providers Window?**

The funding in this window will support the cost of the trainings based on results, during a maximum two-year launch period. Results will include a mix of outputs and outcomes, as detailed below:

- A. 80% of the training cost will be based on the actual number of trainees who benefited from the training provided against the planned number; the amount will be disbursed according to the grant agreement.
- B. 10% of the training cost will be disbursed based on the number of trainees who secured employment in the six months following the training and for a period of at least six months.
- C. The remaining 10% will be disbursed based on the number of women who gained employment in a six-month period following the training.

Note: Achieving 75% percent of the agreed target for employment (point 1& 2) will entitle the applicant to get a full reimbursement of the remaining 10% percentage/training costs. Achieving less than 75% will be calculated based on the actual percentage scored.

**Can a programming company who's intending to expand their business in the IT training field benefit from the New IT Training Service Providers Window?**

The company can apply, and their application will be assessed by DAI/TechStart.

**Will companies receive financial coverage by DAI/TechStart only after meeting the desired training goals or is it possible to get the grant before then?**

The grant window supports two types of costs financially;

- a- Initial operational costs that is usually disbursed according to the budget and the grant agreement.
- b- Training costs that can be disbursed only if predefined training goals achieved.

**Is the company still eligible if it provides trainings in different fields besides IT?**

The company will be considered eligible if it meets the selection and eligibility criteria specified for this window. However, the company can always apply, and their application will be assessed by DAI/TechStart.

**What is the grant ceiling for IT training Service provider companies?**

We expect the applicant to provide a detailed business plan and detailed training plan as requested in the application, and the grant amount will be decided based on total trainings costs and the initial operational costs submitted in the budget

**New HR Service Providers for IT sector Window FAQs:****What is meant by an HR service provider?**

HR service providers are companies who are able to demonstrate that they have modern HR IT recruitment best practices, technology, databases, psychological selection tools, or candidate management practices to bring them to the Palestinian market.

**Upgrading IT Business Infrastructure Window FAQs:****In the Upgrading IT Business Infrastructure Window, what are the eligible types of operational expenses that can be covered by the program?**

In this window, the grant can cover the following expenses, on the condition that evidence is provided, and compliance requirements are met.

1. Technology, Office equipment, and office appliances may include:
  - a. Laptops, routers, switches, links and highspeed internet connection equipment.
  - b. Collaboration tools like (Zoom, office 365 including MS team, etc.), and cloud applications licensing such as (Amazon AWS, and Google cloud applications).
  - c. Leasing or acquisition of photocopiers, printers, projectors, etc. in addition to basic office furniture (desks, chairs, etc.)

**Does the program support helping companies expand in terms of place, equipment, and furniture?**

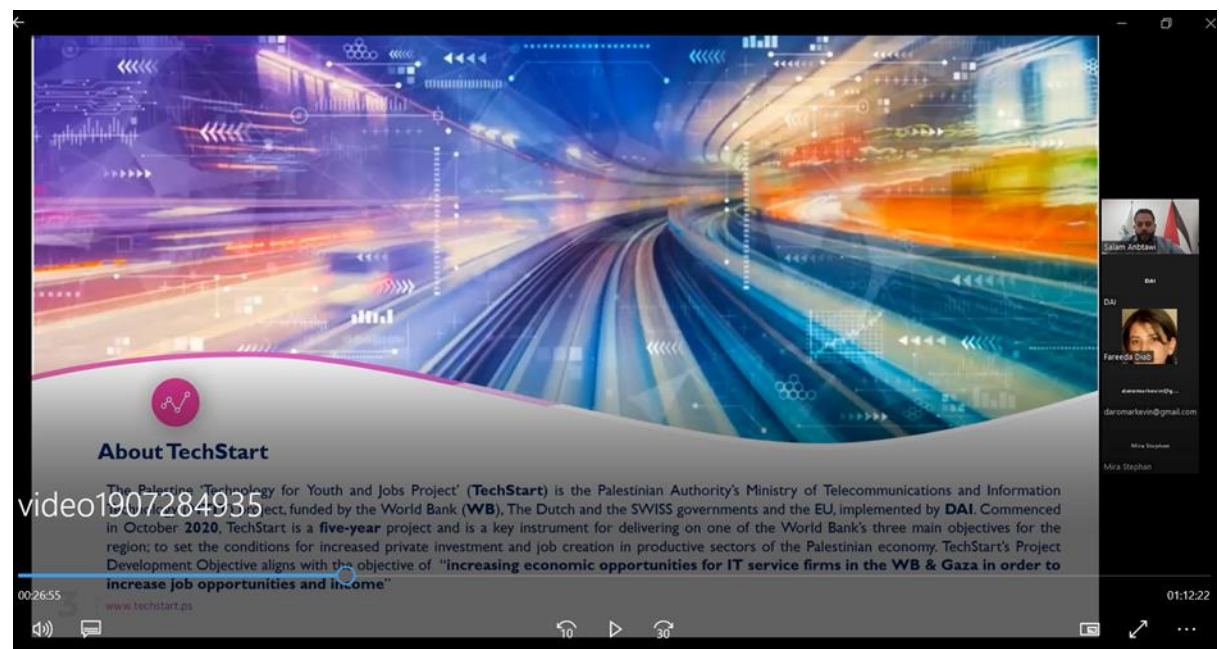
Beneficiary firms will need to demonstrate in their proposals that their ability to fulfil client demands is affected by improper business infrastructure capacity.

**In the Upgrading IT Business Infrastructure Window, do the eligible operational expenses cover items such as Amazon cloud services?**

The grant can cover such expenses on the condition that the company can prove/ justify how the requested service can help the company better serve its clients, and compliance requirements are met.

**Can companies request items such as lithium batteries under the Upgrading IT Business Infrastructure Window to save electricity costs and improve internet services?**

The company can request such item and DAI/TechStart will take a decision based on the company's needs along with considering TechStart's ESMF guidelines.





## TechStart Components

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- Improving IT Service Capabilities**
  - ✓ 1.1: Human capital improvement stipends HCIS
  - ⌚ 1.2: Advisory Services on Managerial Capabilities
  - ⌚ 1.3: IT and gender needs assessment and engagement
  - ✓ 1.4: COVID-19 employment support subsidies
- Improving IT Eco-System**
  - ✓ 2.1: Seed Grants to stimulate private investment
  - ⌚ 2.1: Grants for shared R&D hubs
  - ✓ 2.3: Grants for IT Business infrastructure (focus on Gaza)
- Improving Market Access**
  - ⌚ 3.1: Awareness Raising and International Market Linkages
  - ⌚ 3.2: Promotion and facilitation of FDI in the Palestinian IT ecosystem

Participants: Salim Antkawi, DAI, Farida Dab, daromarkavin@gmail.com, Mira Stephan

## Selection Criteria

After potential beneficiaries pass the initial eligibility criteria, in order to be admitted in the specific program windows, an evaluation of their application against the selection criteria will be conducted

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**01 Track Record**

Firms or individual entrepreneurs need to demonstrate a track record of at least three years of cumulative experience providing the relevant services on a commercial basis to local or international clients.


**Business Plan**

Applicants need to provide a business plan that will include comprehensive information about the business model, market analysis, proposed organization & management, marketing plan, financial model and growth potential.

Grant window 1


Participants: Salim Antkawi, DAI, Farida Dab, daromarkavin@gmail.com, Mira Stephan

## Eligibility Criteria




**Registration**

Be a company currently legally registered, and operating out of the West Bank and Gaza; or in the process of legal registration; or committed to register with Ministry of National Economy




**Foreign entities / entrepreneurs**

Willing to establish new entities and will commit to registering with the Ministry of National Economy



**IT services**

IT services companies and business service providers working in the technology field in software development, computer programming and consultancy, data processing, hosting or related activities



**Environmental Impact**

Projects have minimal or non-existent environmental impacts as defined by the Techstart Environmental manual

**Important Note:** The program supports only entrepreneurs that would like to launch new IT services companies, e.g. outsourcing model, not start-ups in ideation phase. Start-ups are considered mature tech or tech enabled start-ups if they can prove traction / demand in the market and are generating revenues.

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## Beneficiary's Mitigation Measures

- Palestinian Labour Law: Firms should abide with the Palestinian Labour Law and provide acceptable worker protections (minimum wages, max working hours, annual leave, valid insurance against work injuries, etc.).
- Child Labour: Benefiting entity must not employ workers below the age of 15.
- Grievance Mechanism: benefiting entity will put in place a Grievance Mechanism for their workers that is proportionate to their workforce for handling of GBV/SEA/SH. (with the help of TechStart team)
- Code of conduct: the project workers will sign the TechStart-specific Code of Conduct to ensure they are aware of our strict policies around highest standards of business ethics.
- Safety protocol for
- Legal technical assistance will be available to local and foreign companies to support them to register new companies, or branches in West Bank.

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**ESMF**

**Objective:**

To ensure that project activities are designed and implemented in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner.

**Social Risks**

- Labour and workers' rights and poor working conditions
- Discrimination and social exclusion, GBV, specifically relating to vulnerable groups
- Exposure to sexual exploitation and abuse / sexual harassment (SEA/SH)

**Environmental Risks**

- E-waste production

**Environmental and Social Mgmt Framework**

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**TechStart Project Risk Classification**

The Project is classified according to the World Bank's risk classification as Moderate.

» The project will NOT finance any construction / civil work activities.

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**Grievance Redress Mechanism - GRM**

- The GRM is a complaints management procedure that stands separately for the TechStart beneficiaries.
- The GRM system will include special referral pathways for the GBV complaints and sexual harassment and sexual exploitation and abuse.

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