



Subsectors being developed today in the *Mediterranean*

ICT_ *Offshore web development*

Targeted business: web design & development of web applications, maintenance, referencing/positioning, integration of Open Source solutions

Context and market

The subsector today

⊕ Having one's own showroom on the web is fast becoming indispensable for individuals, associations, public institutions as for enterprises. The market for the creation of internet sites and the development of web applications, from the simple personal page to the most complex merchant site, is exploding in the North whereas the South is following the trend, as penetration and infrastructure progress.

⊕ 90% of all web sites globally suffer from a lack, even a total absence of maintenance, once they are on line.

Current Med positioning

⊕ Great dynamism of the IT services sector, rapid development of offshore hubs taking in charge simple, standard tasks (input, simple development , etc.).

Weaknesses & obstacles

⊕ Local market still limited, lack of integrated offers (graphics, ergonomics, etc.), need for a commercial presence close to the client for complex projects (refined schedule of requirements).

Potential markets : customisation of standards low cost sites for private individuals and SMEs, sub-contracting for the development of complex web applications, maintenance, European and Gulf markets

Local opportunities Export

The Mediterranean: why, how ?

The personalisation of standard packages, locally promising sector and buoyant in export

⊕ Many web design agencies suffer from the competition of standardised packages (low cost web design), which may or may not include personalisation services. Free tools have also started to make an appearance (Google Sites), in the same way as open source software (Joomla, Oscommerce, Typo3), which are replacing professionals (for simple projects and inspired users) or may be used as a basis for their involvement. The demand for the customisation of these standard solutions should generate an offer of services which can be carried out in low cost countries [cf Open Source services by Artifex and SODIFRANCE (Tunisia), Elmotaheda and Egy Me (Egypt), kdconcept (Algeria), etc].

The Mediterranean, a booming nearshore offer

⊕ The Med governments have decided to invest massively in the ICTs, encouraging the creation of training centres and dedicated science parks, with the advantage of fiscal and other incentives.

⊕ The rapid growth in local demand and the fragmentation of the local offer may provide a growth area and diversification of income for the offshore location of a foreign agency.

⊕ According to the annual classification of the best sites for the externalisation of services undertaken by the firm Tholons, Cairo occupied 7th place in the world in 2008. Other Med sites are progressing rapidly.



They did it: pioneer stories

Numerous Made in Med talents

All the Med countries have technically and graphically highly capable web agencies, even in countries still hardly visible on this market.

In Syria, for example, Business Optimization Consultants (www.bocme.com), was created in 1994, and today has an agency in Damascus and another in Aleppo. In Algeria, the agency BSA Développement offers remarkable graphic services. See the anthology (non-exhaustive) of agencies in the box "For further details" opposite.

Ebiz Production, the Mediterranean as a production base and a market

From the very outset, the French web agency web integrated into its business model the Mediterranean dimension (talents & production costs and also customers). Created in 1998 in Marseille, Ebizproduction immediately used internet to prepare its foray into Lebanon, undertake prospection and recruit locally its co-workers. In 2004, 9 employees out of the 11 that the company had at that time worked in the Ebizproduction web production studio at Berythech (Beirut science park), within the campus of the Ecole Supérieure des Ingénieurs de Beyrouth (ESIB), which carried out 70% of the production.

Today the agency has clients in 7 countries of the Mediterranean basin, served by commercial teams based in Marseille and Beirut and a network of complementary partners in France, the Lebanon, in Tunisia and in Jordan. To become known, Ebizproduction adopted an effective and inexpensive strategy based on the creation of First Mediterranean portals (First Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur, Egypt, United Arab Emirates and the mother site First Mediterranean). In Lebanon, the creation in 1998 of this local portal in French and English dedicated to business and tourism, and on which a number of local players wanted to be seen, enabled it to make contacts with more than 3.000 enterprises in one year.

Open Web Lab: there's strength in unity!

Self-proclaimed "open web laboratory", Open Web Lab (OWL) is the meeting of dispersed talents in Beirut, Paris, London and NY. Their specialities: visual branding, web design and internet marketing .

Web hosting and administrative services are in London, development is carried out in Beirut, while design is taken care of in Lebanon, in France, in the United Kingdom and in the United States. Production is multilingual (French, English, and Arabic, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and German), for the benefit of clients from the Arab world, Europe and America.

Among their references are to be found Vogue Magazine, large Lebanese newspapers, NGOs, artiste's sites, professional federations, etc. [see openweblab.com]

For further details... (resources, contacts, links)

⊕ Some « creative » Med web agencies : Amman (www.tbkweb.com), Beyrouth (www.cra@maria.com), Egypt (www.graphicone.com, www.vafcom.net, www.ezydwebstudio.com and www.ile-ent.net), Maroc (raf.com-maroc.numerisarts.com), Algeria (BSA: www.agence-web-algerie.com and www.aproxcell.com), etc.

⊕ Integration of Open Source solutions: www.artifactory.net (Tunisia), Egypt (www.simalahada.com and www.pyxma.com), Lebanon (www.chirproduction.com), Algeria (www.tunoxcept.net), etc.

⊕ Free / open source tools: Google sites (sites.google.com), Joomla (www.joomla.org)

⊕ Top 50 Global Emerging Cities, Tholons (www.tholons.com)