



Are you a civil servant in the Middle East and Northern Africa (MENA) region, or do you work for a semi-public organisation in that region? If so, please register for a professional development training course on

Trade Promotion and Economic Diplomacy

Who is the course for?

We invite professionals¹ who are ambitious about professionalising their skills in economic diplomacy, and specifically in trade promotion, to register for this training course. This is a unique opportunity to share your knowledge and skills with other participants and be inspired by colleagues from abroad.

This training course is for civil servants and employees of semi-public organisations in the target countries of Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Palestinian Territories and Tunisia.



To register, you must have between 5 to 10 years of relevant work experience in economic diplomacy and/or trade promotion. Since this is a once in a lifetime experience, you can only participate in a Shiraka training once, and only if you have not previously participated in another Shiraka training programme.

Since we value diversity among our participants, we encourage women to take part.

This training programme is part of the 'Shiraka' training programme, an initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Shiraka aims to strengthen and improve bilateral relations between the Netherlands and the MENA region in the public sector and offers an opportunity to improve public services through reciprocal inspiration. For more information on the Shiraka Training Programme please watch this [video](#).

¹ Civil servants are the main target group. However, a limited number of places are available for participants from semi-public organisations. We welcome participants from organisations that are closely linked with public actors in the relevant field, play a direct or active role in the value chain, or are directly affected by policy development and therefore have a good reason to be involved.

Training course goals

This training in economic diplomacy and trade promotion will help you:

- Develop your knowledge and understanding about economic diplomacy and all its professional dimensions;
- Empower participants with the required skills to develop trade promotion strategies, prepare pitches, and identify and market opportunities relevant to their country's/region's strategic goals;
- Develop a valuable network of peers in your region, country and in the Netherlands;
- Stimulate cooperation between the Netherlands and the Arab region, as well as intraregional cooperation;
- Share your knowledge and skills in trade promotion in your home country;
- Strengthen your connections with the Netherlands and stakeholders in the Netherlands' economic diplomacy ecosystem.

Training course topics

The training course covers the following topics:

- The Netherlands' model for economic diplomacy;
- Global economic/market trends;
- Geopolitics and international economy;
- How to attract sustainable FDI;
- Project and Process Management;
- Presentation and pitching skills;
- Negotiation skills;
- Intercultural and Effective Communications;
- The role of the WTO;
- Back-Home Action Planning;
- Working visits to companies and organisations relevant to economic diplomacy and trade promotion in The Netherlands and Tunisia.

Training course details

- Since all the sessions are in English, we recommend an intermediate level of English.
- Live interpretation during meetings and sessions into Arabic and/or French is available.
- We can offer the training course to 25 people. We will allocate these places to the participating countries based on the quality of the applications.
- The entire training course will last for 2 weeks (10 working days). We expect you to attend all sessions.
- Study visits and social activities are part of the training course.
- You will receive a certificate of participation upon completing the course.

Training course itinerary

The training course will be in 2 parts, and held at 2 locations:

	Dates	City	Country
Part 1	8-12 June 2026	The Hague	The Netherlands
Part 2	12-16 October 2026	Tunis	Tunisia

Part of the course may take the form of blended learning (partly online, partly offline).

If international health and travel restrictions make it impossible to hold a training session in the Netherlands, an alternative will be offered. This may be an online training.

If the training is held online, we expect participants to have good computer skills, access to an adequate computer with a recent operating system and a good internet connection (participants must be able to use Zoom, Word, PowerPoint etc.).

For all participants



- You must organise and pay for your journey to the airport in your home country.
- You are responsible for organising your visa in your home country.

Costs for participants from countries on the OECD-DAC list



- The Dutch government will cover all relevant costs. This includes international travel, accommodation, meals during training days, visa and insurance and tuition fees.
- If you travel from an international airport outside your home country, you will need to cover local travel costs yourself. You will receive compensation for the international leg of your journey.

Costs for participants from countries not on the OECD-DAC list



- You must organise and pay for your own international travel and visa.
- The Dutch government will cover the cost of accommodation, insurance and tuition fees.

No-show or cancellation costs



- If you cannot attend or cancel your participation within 4 weeks prior to the training course, the organisation has the right to claim all the associated costs from your employer.

How to apply

- Applications should be submitted online before the deadline of **5 March 2026**.
- Visit our [Shiraka training courses overview](#) and select the course of your choice by clicking on 'apply'.
- [Log in](#) or create an account using the 'register' button.

More information

IO@rvo.nl (for questions concerning your application and the database)

Ms Paula Stuurman: pstuurman@clingendael.org, Mr Mike Knook: mknook@clingendael.org and Ms Evie Porter: eporter@clingendael.org(for questions concerning the course)

The Shiraka Training Programme is an initiative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Department for International Entrepreneurship of the Netherlands Enterprise Agency implements the Shiraka Training Programme. The Trade Promotion and Economic Diplomacy professional development course will be organised by The Clingendael Institute.

Information on the training course

Experts

Experts who are involved in this training course



Mike Knook is Academy Fellow at Clingendael. He coordinates training programmes for diplomats and other civil servants from the Middle East and North Africa. He is also a trainer in Economic Diplomacy, Economic Security and Trade Promotion.



Stella Pfisterer is researcher at the Rotterdam School of Management at Erasmus University and an accredited partnership broker. Her research focuses on the governance, management, facilitation and monitoring of partnerships and collaborations between governments, businesses and civil society organisations.



Dr Etienne F. Augé is Principal Lecturer in the department of Media and Communication at Erasmus University. His areas of research are: Public relations, Public diplomacy, Cultural diplomacy, Film studies, the Middle East, and Science Fiction.

Study visits

During the training course the following study visits may be organised

To **Rotterdam Port Authority**, which manages, operates and develops the port and industrial area of Rotterdam.

To **FMO**, which is the Dutch entrepreneurial development bank. Its mission is to enable entrepreneurs to increase inclusive and sustainable prosperity.

To the **World Horti Center**, which is the global knowledge and innovation center for international greenhouse horticulture.

Back Home Action Plan

During your participation in the training course you will work on a Back Home Action Plan (BHAPs). Hereunder you find a few examples of the BHAPs participants worked on in the past.

Use lessons learned from sessions on country branding and public diplomacy to develop promotional (video) material for a country's trade promotion agency.

Launch a pilot to share trade and investment promotion strategies from the training with the Ministry Trade And Industry.

Organise workshops for Small Medium Enterprises on Market Analysis tools using lessons from the training.

“The content of the programme was enriching! And it most importantly had a practical application in the Back Home Action Plan”