



Exploring business opportunities

Dutch trade mission to North-Korea (28 September – 4 October 2008)

Rotterdam, October 16, 2008

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, also known as North-Korea) finds itself at the beginning of a new era of economic openness. North-Korea is offering various products and services to export markets, and there is also a need for many foreign products and investments.

The Chamber of Commerce Amsterdam, GPI Consultancy and the Netherlands Council for Trade Promotion recently organized a business mission in order to investigate the business opportunities in this country. This economic mission to North-Korea took place from 28 September to 4 October 2008.



Although it was the first Dutch business mission to DPRK since 2001, the trip was well-organised and very successful. The participants (mainly from The Netherlands, but also from other European and Asian countries) found the program, with tailor made business meetings and company visits, interesting and well-varied. In addition, there were opportunities for informal meetings as well.

Short overview of the program

Sunday 28 September

Those participants already in Beijing assembled for an informal welcome meeting at a local restaurant.

Monday 29 September

In the morning: visa collection at the Embassy of North-Korea in Beijing.



In the evening, the BenCham (Benelux Chamber of Commerce) organised the dinner and seminar: "Doing business with North-Korea". The event addressed various aspect of doing business in Asia and especially in North-Korea.

Mr. Leonid A. Petrov (L&J Development & Consultancy) has broad experiences to the related topic of this event. He shared his findings and results about "North-Korea between the Past and the Future". Mr. Paul Tjia (GPI Consultancy) discussed the topic "Business opportunities in North-Korea (including Information Technology and Business Process Outsourcing)".

This informative event took place on the 50th floor of the famous Capital Club, and was attended by business people from various countries (e.g. Europe, China, South Korea) and also by some diplomatic representatives.



Photo: Mr. Petrov delivering his presentation

Tuesday 30 September

Departure from Beijing to Pyongyang, using the North-Korean national airline Air Koryo. We could witness the growing interest for North-Korea: because of the large number of foreign tourists and travellers, several additional flights from Beijing to Pyongyang had to be scheduled during the day.

Upon arrival, our delegation was welcomed by representatives of the DPRK Chamber of Commerce in Pyongyang. Transport was arranged to the Yanggakdo Hotel, which appeared to be an excellent business hotel. Schedules of business meetings were handed out to the participants, after which a welcome dinner took place.



Photo: one of the new planes of Air Koryo

Wednesday 1 October – Friday 3 October



Business meetings with representatives of North-Korean companies took place in the Yanggakdo Hotel in the mornings. These meetings were arranged, on request by the participants, by the DPRK Chamber of Commerce in Pyongyang.

In the afternoons, the delegates visited local firms. We visited companies in several fields, including agriculture, textiles and garments, ceramics, computer software, art, animation and cartoons.

In addition, meetings with members of EBA (European Business Association) and a visit to the Kim Chaek University took place as well.

Photo: a friendly and informative business meeting



Photo: visit to a company in the field of agribusiness (greenhouse)



Photo: visit to a company in the field of agribusiness (research lab)



Photo: visit to a company in the field of Information Technology (Korea Computer Center)



Photo: visit to a company in the field of animation (SEK)



Photo: example of a company in the field of textiles



Photo: a visit to the electronic library of Kim Chaek University

There was also some time scheduled for tourist activities, such as a citytour of Pyongyang and attending the spectacular Arirang Massgame.



Photo: delegates attending the famous Arirang Massgame



Photo: at a local restaurant - an excellent place for informal business discussions

Saturday 4 October

Departure from Pyongyang to Beijing. Some of the participants took the connecting flight to Amsterdam, while others decided to spend a few more days in China.

Interesting trade and investment opportunities!

The delegation discussed trade opportunities in several areas, including light industry (e.g. textiles, garments, ceramics), agribusiness and Information Technology / Business Process Outsourcing. We were also informed about investment opportunities in a number of sectors, such as mining, energy, agriculture, manufacturing, IT and tourism.

The members of the delegation experienced that taking part in a business mission is a very informative way to explore business opportunities in North-Korea in detail, and to meet new potential business partners. Taking part in a mission is also useful for those European companies already doing business with North-Korea, since it gives them an easy option to meet their Korean trade partners personally.

Because of the success of the 2008 mission, it is our intention to organise another trade mission and/or investment mission to North-Korea in 2009. Companies or Trade Promotion Organizations from other European countries are welcome to join us in co-organizing such an event. In addition, a seminar: "Doing business with DPRK" will take place in Holland as well.

It is also possible for us to give presentations at business seminars, in order to present the findings of the Dutch mission in more detail. An informative videofilm on DVD about the trade mission is currently being prepared by us.

Organizers of the 2008 Dutch business mission

The Korean organizer of the mission:

DPRK Chamber of Commerce
(International Relations Department)
Jungsong-dong, Central District
P.O. Box 89
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Tel: 805-2-381 5926, fax: 850-2-381 5827



The Dutch organizers:



Nederlands Centrum voor Handelsbevordering
Netherlands Council for Trade Promotion



NCH - Netherlands Council for Trade Promotion <http://www.handelsbevordering.nl>



Amsterdam Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.kvk.nl/regio/Amsterdam/Default.asp?>

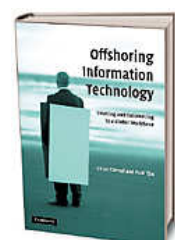
GPI Consultancy

<http://www.gpic.nl>



The delegation leader was Mr. Paul Tjia, founder and director of GPI Consultancy. His report of one of his previous visits to Pyongyang is available at http://www.gpic.nl/IT_in_NKorea.pdf. Established in 1995, GPI Consultancy is a specialized Dutch consultancy firm in the field of offshore sourcing. It is regularly involved in study tours to various countries.

Paul Tjia (together with American professor Erran Carmel) is the author of the handbook: "Offshoring Information Technology - Sourcing and Outsourcing to a Global Workforce" (Cambridge University Press, reprinted in 2007). The Table of Contents can be found at <http://www.gpic.nl/bookTOC.pdf>



For further information



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Photo (above and below): the rapidly expanding industrial zone at Kaesong

