



Panama-City
Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

The Panama Newsflash is a publication composed by the Consulate-General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Panama and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in San José. The newsflash provides an update in terms of imperative economical developments, the most important tenders and a selection of other relevant business news to do with Panama. This newsflash is shared with a distinctive group of Dutch businesses with special interests in Panama. It is put together on the basis of publicly available information from various sources such as news articles, press releases, and third party information. The Consulate-General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Panama and the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in San José are not responsible for the accuracy of the published information. If you do not want to receive the Panama newsflash, or wish to add a person to the distribution list or desire to send an observation, please feel free to send a message to sanjose@trade-minbuza.nl.

Information seminar Panama a great success !!



In order to inform Dutch companies on the latest developments and possibilities in Panama, an information seminar was organized by NCH on the 26th of August. Besides information on the opportunities in Panama, businessmen were able to listen to Dutch companies that are already active on the market, which provided information about their own experiences and also the Dutch companies who form part of the consortium for the widening of the canal gave presentations. Furthermore, information was provided about the outgoing trade mission in October. Some 30+ companies attended the seminar and expectations are high for a large trade mission.

Mission for the Maritime, Logistics and Transport sectors to Panama



By order of the EVD, the Embassy in San José and the Consulate in Panama City, as part of the 2g@there programme, NCH (Dutch Centre for Trade Promotion) is organizing a mission for the Maritime, Logistics and Transport sectors to Panama that will take place from the 12th to the 16th of October. Panama is home to years of extensive economic growth and is, thanks to the enlargement of the Panama Canal, at the point of further growth.



The EVD and NCH therefore believe that October 2009 is the perfect time to organize another Dutch trade mission for the maritime, logistics and transport sectors to Panama. It is generally

known that Panama wants to grow into one of the most important transportation hubs in the world, for both air and sea freight. Thanks to its strategically important location, the Panama Canal, the construction of main ports on both sides of the Panama Canal as well as the attractive investment conditions and taxation system many international logistics and transport companies have decided to open up branches in Panama. Multinationals have established regional offices thanks to the excellent connections by air to Central and South America from Panama City.

The Consulate and the Embassy have concluded a market study including important factor such as the change of government, the economic stagnation world wide and the signing of the panama canal enlargement contract. The market study aims at finding tangible information on business opportunities and the key actors and contacts. The results have been presented to Dutch companies during a Panama Maritime Conference in The Hague organised by NCH.

Interested Dutch companies have applied to an intake process in which they have communicated specific needs and request. Based on these terms in Panama brokers have been contracted to prepare custom made agenda's (based on needs of the Dutch companies) For each company. The aim is to do matchmaking in a targeted manner. The brokers have been contracted by the Embassy and Consulate on a no cure no pay contract. Furthermore, participants will be able to visit the Panama Canal Authorities, Port Authorities, terminals and a ship-building yard. Additionally, a visit has to be planned to a Dutch towing-service company has been very successful in Panama.

The EVD covers a significant part of the organizational costs. This means that the fee for participants to the trade mission will only be € 500, -- (excluding VAT, travel costs and accommodation costs).

Are you interested in participating in this one of a kind match-making trade mission to Panama? Please request a participation form by calling or emailing to:

Secretariat Mission for the Maritime, Logistics and Transport sectors to Panama
Nederlands Centrum voor Handelbevordering NCH (Dutch Centre of Trade Promotion)

Directed to: Jan van Wissen

Tel: 070-3441555

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Dutch outbound trade mission to Central American EVD has assigned DLV Plant, with the local support of INCAE business school (Ranked #1 in Latin America), the Ministries of Agriculture of Central America, Dutch Embassies in Central Amerika and SNV to organize a B2B Food Processing Trade Mission. DLV Plant is coordinating a trade mission to Central America to help Dutch suppliers get a better understanding of the current market trends. Participants will meet with local branch organizations and companies, receive market briefs, individual matchmaking and possibly tour local commercial facilities. Companies will have the opportunity to exhibit their products and meet with buyers during tabletop display matchmaking sessions. Focus products are: Tomato, Meat and Poultry, Dairy Products, Canned and Shelf Stable Goods, Frozen and Processed, Juices, Spices and Ingredients. For more information, and to register, please contact Jan Tuinstra at j.tuinstra@dlvplant.nl

Panama wants to be part of EU Agreement (Source: prensalibre.com) It requested Central America's support to convince the EU of admitting its inclusion even though it doesn't belong to SIECA. The European Union for now has insisted that an Association Agreement must be negotiated with the entire region. They consider membership in the Central American Economic Integration Secretary (SIECA) as an indispensable requisite to consider a country as a participant of the Agreement. Panama is trying to gather support from the governments of Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador for convincing the European Union to admit Panama to the Association Agreement.

Opposition lawmakers may stall Canada's free trade accord with Panama (Source: Bloomberg) The free trade agreement between Canada and Panama signed



Aug. 11 by Stephen Harper during visit to Panama may be stalled or even defeated in Canada's Parliament unless Prime Minister Stephen Harper can convince at least one opposition party to overcome concerns about Panama's tax policies. Lawmakers from all three opposition parties said that while no decisions have been made, they may oppose the agreement over concerns that the Central American country is a tax haven. A refusal to pass the accord by opposition lawmakers would hamper Harper's foreign policy strategy of forging tighter links with countries in the Americas.

Panama fights to leave fiscal paradise blacklists (Source: ANSA) Panama is launching an aggressive international strategy to be removed from tax haven blacklists. The strategy includes "measures against countries that discriminate against us", said Alberto Vallarino, the economy minister. Vallarino said Panama had decided to negotiate, sign and implement treaties that would avoid double taxation. During the negotiations, action would be taken against countries "that unfairly include us in blacklists." Panama would resort to the World Trade Organization to back its claims, Vallarino added. Panama has notified it wants to start negotiations with Italy and the Netherlands.

Mexico would remove Panama from blacklist (Source: timesoftheinternet.com) An agreement will be negotiated to avoid double taxation and ensure tax information exchange between both countries. Alberto Vallarino, Panama's Economy Minister, said that meetings are scheduled for September 2009. "In April, Panama was included in the tax haven list by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), because, even though it is open to cooperation, it has not materialized its commitment to provide tax information to other countries", reported website Timesoftheinternet.com.

Government put halt to double taxation (La Prensa) The vice-president and chancellor, Juan Carlos Varela, asked the ambassadors of Holland and Italy in Panama to initiate a series of negotiations to obtain agreements that avoid the double taxation between companies of these two countries, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. According to Varela, this will help Panama to be excluded "from any discriminatory list" that can jeopardize the financial system of the country. One is the black list of the so called "tax havens". The negotiations will have to adjust to the constitutional and legal processes that prevail in Panama, and thus that the privacy of the people is protected and guaranteed against illegal interferences. In addition, there can't be an automatic interchanges of information". The Organization for the Cooperation and the Economic Development (the OECD) considers several countries of the region, including Panama, to be a "Tax Haven".

Panama poised to break with banking secrecy The month-old government in Panama is expected to announce as soon as this week the first steps toward breaking with decades of banking secrecy that have drawn both tax-allergic customers and global rebukes. Panamanian officials insist that their limited financial unveiling is motivated solely by a desire to retool the economy for the post-financial crisis era, but the initiative's more immediate impact may be felt in the halls of the US Congress. That's because Panama's image as a leading offshore financial center conducive to hiding profits from the tax man has become the latest hurdle for a pending US trade deal, which has languished since its 2007 signing during the Bush administration.



Cable & Wireless pays Panama's government \$42 million in dividends and tax (Source: Panama Star) Jorge Nicolau, president of Cable & Wireless Panama, handed President Ricardo Martinelli a check for \$42.1 million in payment of dividends and tax for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. This payment corresponds to the State's ownership of 49 percent of Cable & Wireless shares. The company owns the same amount of shares and the remainder will be placed in a trust belonging to the company employees. \$39 million

correspond to dividends on shares owned by the State, with \$2.5 million coming from taxes deducted from the dividends of the employees and Cable & Wireless.



Panama seeks proposals for fourth dry excavation Canal contract

(Source: Logistics Management) The Panama Canal Authority released its request for proposals for the fourth dry excavation contract late last week, the second largest and most complex project after the locks contract. Rounding out the last of four dry excavation projects, the fourth dry excavation project represents a key portion of

expansion's new access channel linking the new Pacific locks with the waterway's existing Gaillard Cut (the narrowest stretch of the Panama Canal). The news comes in the wake of a report issued by the Dutch consultancy, Dynamar, which predicts that volumes to the US East and Gulf coasts from the Far East could climb from 3.2 million twenty-equivalent units (TEUs) today to 15.7 million TEUs by 2020.



ICA to invest \$215 million in Panama islands project

(Source: Estrella) Mexican construction company ICA forecast that by 2012 it will have built the artificial islands that conclude the Punta Pacifica development in Panama City. ICA is investing \$215 million in the project, which will be sold to Grupo Los Pueblos. The project includes 19 hectares of landfill for a low-rise housing project.

Grupo Mundial finds missing link in Central American insurance market (Source: La República) Panama-based Grupo Mundial officially became the first foreign company to enter the Costa Rican insurance market and the second to compete with the state National Insurance Institute following the abolition of its 84-year monopoly. Grupo Mundial, which is present in all the rest of Latin America, will initially concentrate on auto insurance. "Costa Rica has been our missing link in the region, and we believe it holds big business opportunities," said Álvaro Castro, the group's general manager in Costa Rica.



Hewlett Packard invests \$13 million in new service center in Panama

(Source: Panama Star) Hewlett Packard opened its new Best Shore and Deliver Center in Panama, creating 145 jobs and in support of its sister center in Costa Rica. HP Panama said that the total investment in the project was \$13 million and that HP will provide technical support for its clients both in Central America and around the

world. Currently HP is developing the service side of the business and does not plan to open a manufacturing plant in Panama. However, this could be a possibility in the future.



Ports busier, but container traffic down From January to May, the movement of cargo through the National Port System grew by 10.1 percent compared to the same period in 2008. The increase was due mainly to a rise in bulk cargo, which increased 42.1 percent. By contrast, container traffic was down substantially from last year. A report by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean reported that the ports of Panama and Peru recorded the highest levels of growth in Latin America in 2008. Manzanillo

International Terminal registered a growth in the handling of TEU's of 9.7 percent. According to analysts, this increase reflects an increase in the number of empty containers handled at the terminal.



Panamanian aquaculturist purchased by Global Company

(Source: Open Blue Sea Farms) The world's largest open sea aquaculture operation will be located in Panama, after the purchase of Pristine Oceans by Blue Sea Farms. Since August 2009, Open Blue

Sea Farms operates Panamanian-funded Pristine Oceans. The merger of the two cobia farms operated in Panamanian waters will be ready by the end of this year, becoming the world's largest open sea aquaculture operation. "Our mission is to produce healthy fish and shrimps, as well as protecting the oceans", said Brian O'Hanlon, CEO of Open Blue Sea Farms. "We are taking a great step forward by merging our vision and experience with Pristine's staff and fish inventory".



Heineken will set up base in Panama (Source: Horacero.com.pa)

The subsidiary of Heineken International B.V. decided to establish its regional headquarters in Panama. Roberto Henríquez, Commerce and Industry Minister, stated that the brewer was attracted "not only by fiscal incentives, but also for geographical and logistical advantages offered by Panama for coordinating operations from their global headquarters in the Netherlands". "With over \$28 billion in assets, Heineken operates in five regions: Eastern Europe, Central and Western Europe, the Americas, Africa and the Middle East, as well as Asia - Pacific", reported Horacero.com.pa.

Tax reforms (source Panama Star) The National Assembly of Panama is analyzing a new project of fiscal reforms. Alberto Vallarino, Finance minister, said Panama has one of the lowest tax collections in Latin America and that the booming sectors of the economy must contribute to social expenses. The new proposal establishes tax increases on gambling centers, telephone companies, banking services, real state, the Free Trade Zone Colón and financial procedures, insurance and legal services. Among the increases, is a 50 percent tax on cigarettes. Half of this tax would be allocated to the National Oncology Institute. The private sector has reacted with resistance. Adolfo Linares, president of the Chamber of commerce, said the project went to the Assembly without consultation. He said ample dialogue is required, this can't be done just to improve the government's cash flow. A tax increase was also considered for the two local beer brewers of which one is owned by Heineken but was cancelled after both the American and Dutch Embassy put up strong arguments against it.



6 Consortiums bidding for Panamanian Metro (Source: prensalibre.com)

IDB and CAF announced the six consortiums pre-selected for advising through the entire Metro project. These are URS Holdings Inc. (U.S.A.), Parsons-Brinkerhoff (U.S.A.), Metro de Madrid (Spain) , Metro de Barcelona (Spain) , COTEBA (France) y POYRY/Cal y Mayor y Asociados (Switzerland and Mexico), informed Roberto Roy, executive secretary of the Panamanian Metro. Roy told Prensalibre.com that "we will provide the bidding terms for the six selected consortiums this week, and in four weeks we will announce the winner". According to the Inter-American Development Bank's web site, the work is estimated to be worth \$2 million and will consist of providing "technical advice" to developers of the project.

Panamanian economy improves (Source: Infolatam) June's Monthly Economic Activity Index recorded a small increase of 0.31%. With this result, the downward trend is finally reversed. The index had been -4.58% in April and -3.90% in May. Alberto Vallarino, Economy and Finance minister told InfoLatam: "We could say that the economy is slowing down its negative trend".

Private companies will collect delinquent taxes (Source: Prensa.com) The Economy and Finance Ministry (MEF), will select three companies to collect \$590 million in unpaid taxes. The selection process will be done through public bidding before next year. Candidate companies must have experience in the Panamanian market, and their task will begin in 2010. "They will apply, as established in the law, co-active enforcement to clients who don't

get up to date in their obligations. This includes collecting debts through vehicles, terrains, real estate and bank accounts", reported Panamanian newspaper Prensa. This initiative creates opportunities for joint ventures for Dutch companies (incasso bureaus).

Panama hosts Congress on Banking Security (Source: Federación Latinoamericana de Bancos) The XIV Latin American Congress on Banking Security will be held in Panama City on September 28 and 29. The event, known as CELAES, will be organized by the Banking Association of Panama, and will take place in the Marriot Hotel in Panama City. Experts on Physical Security, Information Security, Auditing, Fraud Prevention, Operations and Money Laundering will meet and discuss best practices.



Martinelli: "No More Ruthless Capitalism" (Source: Presidencia de Panamá) "In my government, the interests of the people come first. For that the country needs abundant energy at a fair price". The Panamanian Government announced measures to lower energy bills, and, in the words of president Ricardo Martinelli, they "must be effective, and reflected in lower fees to users". "I will be personally involved in this topic, because in this country, law must be complied with", said Martinelli, adding that "we want businessmen, not ruthless ones ('empresaurios', in his own Spanish words) who engage in savage capitalism. Some international companies are hiding behind what is dubbed legal certainty; but nobody cares about the people's legal certainty".

Panama will implement Digital Signature (Source: pa-digital.com.pa) The project is currently in the analysis phase, but it is expected to be operating within the first 100 days of the current administration. Roberto Henríquez, Commerce and Industry Minister, said that implementing digital signatures will simplify administrative procedures, for benefit of the country's economy. The new plans of the government to automatize the government creates opportunities for companies in the e-government sector.



Money laundering congress in Panama (Source: Yahoo! Noticias) The congress will analyze creating new controls and improving existing ones to prevent money laundering. Experts from Argentina, Mexico, Venezuela, Guatemala, U.S., Dominican Republic, Colombia and Panama will be present at the activity, to be held from August 26 to 28. Julio César Aguirre, president of the organizing committee, remarked: "The felony of money laundering and financing terrorism is complex, hard to prevent, not easy to investigate, and even harder to penalize. Therefore, constant training and actualization is necessary and obligated", reported Yahoo Noticias.

Brazil's Embraer could enter Panama (Source: Prensa.com) The company Embraer could install a plane factory in Panama. This was reported by Industry and Commerce Ministry Roberto Hernández, when he was speaking about a recent trade mission by 140 Brazilian businessmen. Prensa.com published related comments from Panama's vice president Juan Carlos Varela: "There are many Brazilian companies interested in establishing in our country, and also Brazilian banks are interested in financing infrastructure projects".

Panama pipeline reversed (Source Reuters) Tesoro Corp (TSO.N) has shipped its first barrels of crude oil from the Atlantic to the Pacific Basin on a reversed Panama pipeline, the company said Thursday. Reversal of the 81-mile (130 km) Petroterminal de Panama pipeline, which formerly flowed from the Pacific to the Atlantic, creates a new oil conduit from the Atlantic to the Pacific and gives Tesoro access to more crude for its refineries in California, Washington, Hawaii and Alaska, the company said. The first oil through was Castilla blend from Colombia, which will be refined in California, Koskie said.

Panama flag registration: more ships, fewer detentions The Panama Registry now has 8,644 vessels of more than 500 dwt entered with a total gross tonnage of 202.6m up from 8,605 vessels totalling 183.5m gt as of December 2008. The Panama Maritime Authority (AMP), quoting Lloyd's Register, says Panama's merchant fleet represents 21.87% of the world's total fleet. Despite increased vessel numbers, detentions of Panama-flagged vessels fell to 2.5%, down from 12.7%. Japan is the largest customer of Panama's Ship Registry accounting for 45.4% of the total fleet, followed by Korea, 7.1%, China, 6.7%, Greece, 6.4% and Taiwan, 4.3%.

Government to ask Free Zone for \$100 million more in taxes President Ricardo Martinelli plans on asking the users of the Colón Free Zone to contribute at least \$100 million more in taxes than they currently pay. "Business there was \$1.5 billion in 2008, and the Treasury received only \$62.9 million," said Dulcidio De La Guardia, deputy finance minister. "The \$100 million that we are asking for is a tiny fraction of the business being generated. The changes are not going to prevent them from remaining competitive, It's just a matter of justice. Employees can not carry the brunt of the burden while certain economic sectors are exempt."



\$2 Million for Business Incubation in Panama (Source: thegovmonitor.com) Business incubator "Ciudad del Saber" (City of Knowledge), signed an agreement with IDB, for fostering entrepreneurial culture and supporting business projects. Besides promoting entrepreneurial culture and fostering projects in Panama, the business incubator at 'Ciudad del Saber' will create a sustainable technical and financial framework for developing, incubating and financing these business ventures. Some of the

objectives of the project are to create and foster incubator networks, create an angel investor network and a seed capital fund.

Works in Tocumen airport to start by the end of August (Source: Prensa.com) Once environmental studies are presented to the Tocumen Board of Directors, construction will start. Rafael Flores, general manager of Tocumen, reported that Colombian consortium Aerotocumen would receive the order for starting the project by the end of August. "The consortium will have 15 months to deliver the project, which includes the construction of a new dock with 12 access bridges, redesign of the main facade of the current terminal, an administrative building and a presidential hall, among other projects", reported Prensa.com.

\$25 million for pineapple plantation in Panama (Source: pa-digital.com.pa) Costa Rican company Dalota S.A. is exploring the feasibility of developing an agri-industrial pineapple plantation. In a recent visit to the Panamanian Commerce Ministry, company spokespersons reported that 2.300 jobs could be created if the project is carried out. Newspaper Panamá América published in its website: "Additionally, representatives of DALOTA are looking for strategic alliances with national producers".



Panamá Pacífico development underway (Source: estrelladepanama.com) \$65 million have already been invested in the former Howard Air Base. Henry Kardonski is the CEO of London & Regional Panamá, developer of the project. He assured that by the end of 2009, over \$100 million will be invested, 15% of the targeted \$705 million. Work on the industrial business park is

expected to be finished this month, with 10.000 m2 of office space and 21.000 m2 of warehouses. "Some 3.000 are currently working in the area, and, by the end of the year, a total 5.000 workers are expected", reported newspaper La Estrella. "According to Edgar Hernández, construction director, 85% of the planned infrastructure for 2009 is already completed".

Panama: "Technology Hub" for 2018 (Source: Prensa.com) The nation aims to become one of the world's top five countries in technology export capacity. One of the first steps was the creation of a technology cluster, located in "Ciudad del Saber" (City of Knowledge), comprised of 6 companies. "Panama's strategy for achieving this goal is based on the results of Peter Wilson's study, professor at Hass Business University, in Berkley, U.S.", reported Prensa.com. "The goal is tough, but with the determination of the industry, academy, and, above all, the government, it could be reached", commented Wilson".

Embrapa will open Panamanian headquarters (Source: Prensa.com) Embrapa, a Brazilian agricultural research company, will install its regional headquarters in Panama. The president of International Cooperation at Panama's Agricultural Development Ministry said that the presence of this company will boost feasibility studies for ethanol production. "For the time being, the company expects to install Panama commercializing plants with a double objective: unsold inventory will be adapted to ethanol production", reports Prensa.com.

Panama aims to double power-generation capacity over next 15 years. (Source: Efe) Panama's government aims to double the nation's electricity generation capacity between this year and 2023, by when it should reach 2,600 megawatts, said energy secretary Juan Manuel Urriola. "Panama is going to have an energy surplus that will allow us to become exporters," said Urriola, who said that more than half the new capacity will come from hydroelectric plants. The plans involve investment of \$1.158 billion over the next 15 years.

Panama: \$16 million for biofuels (Source: Prensa.com) In the next five years, the State will install a biodiesel and an ethanol plant. The project, directed by the Ministry of Agricultural Development (Mida), also includes activating an existing biodiesel plant. "The existing machinery is worth \$1 million, and was built by the state-owned Colombian Corporation of Agricultural Research", reported Prensa.com. "We will have to build the infrastructure where it will be located, and this would cost \$600.000".

Telecom companies invest in renewable energy (Source: pa-digital.com.pa) Panamanian carriers Cable & Wireless and Digicel Panama have installed stations powered by wind and sun energy. These stations were built in remote access areas, and had a price tag of approximately \$350.000. Eduardo Ryan, Digicel Panama president, said that "... these stations are costly because they work through satellite connections, which demands higher capacity to guarantee backup for the user ... these facilities backup 150% of their daily energy requirement, meaning three days of working without power in case of failure".



Spain's Fersa gets permit to build second wind farm in Panama. (Source: Bloomberg) Fersa Energias Renovables, the Spanish renewable-energy developer that operates on three continents, won authorization to build a second wind farm in Panama. The Barcelona-based company got approval to develop a 105-megawatt wind park in Cocolé. This first phase of the park will require an investment of 126 million euros, it said today in a regulatory filing.



Wind Expo Panama in September 2009 (Source: windexpo.org) From September 2-4, the second Latin American Wind Energy Conference and Exposition will be held. With the goal of "Integrating Wind Energy into the Latin American energy matrix," the Latin American Association of Wind Energy (LAWEA) is organizing Panama Wind Expo 2009. The program consists of 3 days of exhibitions and conferences related to the subject of wind power and there is an important space reserved for business development. Participants may interact with the players in a sector that promises to grow more each day

and is looking to become a source of renewable energy for massive use from Mexico to Patagonia. The Dutch Embassy in Costa Rica in cooperation with the Dutch Embassy in Colombia, have contracted Metasus Consulting from the Netherlands who is near the completion of a study into the opportunities for Dutch companies for renewable energy and energy saving. A possible trade mission will be planned for May of 2010. For more information contact: Ir. A.T. (Bert) Keesman at e-mail: keesman@metasus.nl or via www.metasus.nl



Panama Logistics Expo 2009 (Source: webpicking.com) On October 14 and 15, companies will show their products and services, forming contacts between themselves and potential customers. Panama Logistics Expo 2009, to be held at the Vasco Núñez de Balboa Convention Center, will bring together multinational companies, suppliers, government representatives, consultants, agents and freight and passenger transport companies. Among those attending the conference are: The Panama Canal Authority, Colón Free Trade Zone, SENACYT (National Secretary of Science, Technology and Innovation.), Kawasaki, Suez Canal Authority, Cranfield University, Latin America Logistics Center, DHL Global Forwarding, KPMG Mexico and PROINTEC Panama.

[More information](#)



EVD Panama country webpage

The EVD has a Panama country webpage where you can find up to date information, such as: business news, economical developments, tenders, country information (incl. fact sheet and laws), interesting sectors, activities, important documents and the business country guide from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. For more information please visit the website: www.evd.nl/landen. More information can be obtained from Marjolijn Steinebach, country manager Panama, through email panama@info.evd.nl or by phone (0031) 070-7788698.



Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands as information source

On the internet site from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in San José (covering the countries Panama, Costa Rica, Honduras and El Salvador) you can find general information on the specific countries but also commercial information. Our 'handelswijzers' (business trade guides) entail broad and up-to-date information on how to do business in each of the four countries. It is a useful tool/guide for Dutch exporters and investors. Visit: www.holanda.cr, www.handelswijzer.com, www.doingtradeincentralamerica.com or www.centralamericab2b.com.

For more information you can contact our commercial department at the Dutch Embassy in San José thru email sanjose@trade-minbuza.nl or by phone (00506) 2296 1490 (Carel Richter, Hans Buhrs or Monique van Hussen).

You can also contact our Consulaat-Generaal in Panama (Dieter Ploeger), Phone: (00507) 263 6494 or (00507) 264 7257. Email: consuladonl@cwpanama.net