

PRESS RELEASE
Ramallah, 17 August 2008

Geothermal goes MENA
- MED-ENEC Pilot Project in Ramallah inaugurated -

Geothermal Pilot Project inaugurated in Ramallah

On 17 August 2008, the first geothermal system in Palestine was presented in a conference in the Ramallah Grand Park Hotel. The conference was well attended by nearly 100 participants from the West Bank and through a live video-conference by about additional 50 participants in the Gaza Strip. The Ramallah based Union Construction and Investment Corp. (UCI) presented this cutting-edge technology that has been implemented in cooperation with the Palestinian Energy Authority (PEA) and supported by the EU-financed project MED-ENEC. After the conference, the participants had the opportunity to see the geothermal equipment and to experience the air conditioned rooms in the demonstration villa.



Source (all 4 photos): Klaus Wenzel, MED-ENEC

Consortium Partners : GTZ Germany – ECOFYS Netherlands – NEEDS Lebanon – ERC Egypt

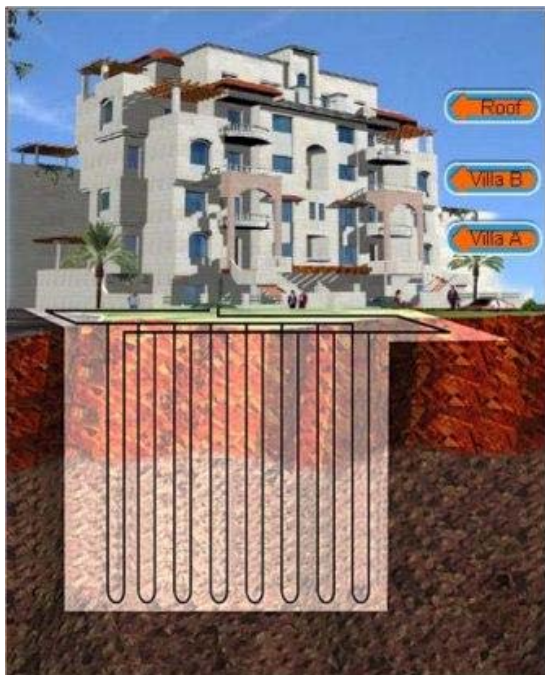
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The event received a remarkable media coverage from local newspapers (Al-Quds, Al-Ayyam, Al-Hayyat), Palestinian Press Agencies (Wafa, maan) and different TV-stations (Palestine TV, Watan TV, Al-Jazeera TV, Al-Arabyia TV and MBC TV).

Geothermal systems: an innovative technology and a profitable product

The pilot project is located in Etihad Subdivision of the city of Ramallah in the West Bank. It is one unit in a complex of 62 “conventional” semi-detached villas built on an area of 24,000 m². The 390 m² demonstration villa includes three floors, a walk-out basement and a garage. The main elements of the energy concept for the building are good insulation of the basement floor, walls and windows and the use of geothermal energy. 10 vertical boreholes, each 70 meters deep, deliver enough energy to the 23 KW heating and cooling system (2 heat pumps) in order to reduce annual heating and cooling costs from 3,300 US\$ to merely 850 US\$ per year; which means energy cost savings of over 70%. With the high energy prices in Palestine, the pay-back period is less than 5 years.



Left picture: MED-ENEC Pilot Project in Ramallah with geothermal ground loops
Picture below: Ground-coupled heat pump

Source: both photos from UCI Corp., Ramallah)



MENA Geothermal: a new company for disseminating geothermal energy in the region

Due to the success of the Pilot Project and benefiting from the know-how acquired, UCI meanwhile created a new company "MENA Geothermal" and already received numerous requests from different countries in the region (Jordan, Israel, etc.). Also, the newly constructed UCI headquarters in Ramallah has been equipped with another large geothermal system, saving 30,000 US\$ of energy costs and 40 tonnes of CO₂ per year. The MED-ENEC Pilot Project experience was extremely helpful for UCI to overcome initial market barriers, reducing learning cost and building up pioneer's know-how.

Energy challenges in the Mediterranean region

The EU-financed project “Energy Efficiency in the Construction Sector in the Mediterranean (MED-ENEC) aims at giving a boost to energy efficiency measures and to the use of renewable energy in the construction sector of Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. MED-ENEC has an

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integrated project approach, combining activities for the improvement of framework conditions such as laws, standards and incentive programs with demonstration projects, capacity building and the promotion of business cooperation and technology transfer. UCI had been selected in 2006 as a winner in an international competition for project proposals of energy-efficient houses in 10 countries south and east of the Mediterranean. Since then, MED-ENEC supported the Pilot Project with technical assistance and a financial contribution.

“This was a great boost for our efforts and a great incentive to pursue geothermal technology. The EU clearly understands the difficulty of implementing a new technology and importance of the success of the first project. We were excited to start working”, said Khaled Al Sabawi, President of the newly established company MENA Geothermal Ltd.



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