'Land of Creation': The Position, Brand Owners, and Contributors for Israel's Branding

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Abstract. The modern and independent State of Israel celebrated the seventieth anniversary of its proclamation of independence in 2018. Besides this landmark anniversary, the remarkable development of Israel's image in the past decade was also a cause for celebration. Nowadays, many people around the world consider Israel as a start-up nation, the stronghold of innovation and risk capital, and the home of outstanding researchers and research organizations – or at least people have this association. In recent years, the 'industry of peace', tourism has also undergone significant expansion in the country. This has not always been the case in the past – the change is the result of conscious efforts, which is primarily attributed to the real successes of the economic structure and secondarily to controlled positioning and country branding activity. How could this positive country brand of a 'start-up nation' and the 'land of creation and creativity' be created? How can it be that many people consider Israel as a country with vibrant, colourful, rich metropolises, the cradle of innovative enterprises, millions of USD in capital investment and world-changing patents instead of a powder keg and the Arab–Israeli conflict?

The methodology to analyse the topic is based on an examination of relevant literature and in-depth interviews conducted by the authors in Israel, involving a synthesis of interviews with the important figures of the innovation ecosystem and organizations involved in country branding. The present article aims to describe the branding ecosystem of Israel, introduce its main actors and activities in order to pave the way for future in-depth research.

Keywords: country branding, tourism destination marketing, Israel, start-up, innovation

1. Introduction – Preconceptions about Israel

It is a frequently asked and long-standing question about Israel as to whether the country actually belongs to Europe, Asia, or North Africa. In 1581, German Protestant pastor and theologian Heinrich Bünting drew a three-leaf-clover-shaped world map representing Europe, Asia, and Africa – with Jerusalem in the middle, as the centre of the three continents. Of course, Bünting's world map did not serve as a geographical and orientation compass but as a clear presentation of worldviews.

Today Israel's Ministry of Tourism still positions the country as lying in the crossroads of the three continents. In terms of natural geography, Israel is located in Asia, considering that the man-made border between Asia and Africa is the Egyptian Suez Canal, while the Bosporus forms the boundary between Europe and Asia. The question of affiliations is a more complex, controversial issue from a socio-geographical and cultural point of view.

The cradle of the three monotheistic world religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, is located here, including the Old City of Jerusalem, which incorporates the most important holy sites in an area of less than a square kilometre. The country is located in the Eastern Mediterranean, in the Levantine region, on the Western periphery of the Middle East. Its population is mixed in terms of ethnicity, origin, and religion. Jewish population from all over the world flowed into the country, bringing with them their culture and mentality. Israel also has a significant number of Arab, Druze, and Bedouin citizens, and Filipino and African guest workers are not to be neglected either.

For decades, the Middle East conflict and the desert environment that covers 60 percent of its territory determined the country. It took many years of conscious work to overwrite them.

2. Economic Development and Spatial Representation – Geo-Economic Success Story

Despite its small size, one must adapt to different climatic and topographical conditions in the narrow but 424-kilometer-long country. The northern part is dominated by agricultural production, the central region by the high-tech sector and the service industry, and the production areas in the sparsely populated southern region up to the border of the desert are mostly utilized for agriculture and the infrastructure of the army. They often describe Israel as a quasi-island country, referring to its isolation and confinement. As it has no or only limited trade with states in its neighbourhood and the region, and it is poor in raw materials and minerals, with little area and little arable land, it has consciously put the focus of its economic development on the production of high value-added, research-intensive, exportable products and services instead of

encouraging the development of industrial or processing activities. The extremely limited nature of land transport and the lack of large, solvent markets available nearby also limit the export of produced goods significantly, wherefore the country must focus on air, water, and digital transport.

Thanks to the World Wide Web, digital solutions and export products that require low resource, promise high yield, and target the global market can be sold immediately and do not require a container, packaging, or complicated customs procedures and insurance to reach their destination. Thus, it soon became clear that investing in research and development activities and software development has a huge economic potential – not to mention its contribution to Israel's national security defence capabilities, which is vital to the country. For example, we can mention CheckPoint, which is today one of the world's largest cybersecurity companies – it was founded in 1993, at the dawn of the Internet era, creating the first firewall in history. There are few who have not heard of the so-called Iron Dome air defence system designed to destroy short-range rockets fired at Israel. Nevertheless, the country does not only use the firewall and the Iron Dome for its own physical and virtual protection – it also exports them.

Today, CheckPoint is responsible for the security of several governments and large corporations. They also protect critical infrastructures and power plants from intrusions. The Iron Dome – and many other technologies used in tactics and defence – is also sold abroad by companies such as Rafael Advanced Technologies Ltd or Israeli Aerospace Industries Ltd.

3. Tourism Development – Government Incentives and the TravelTech Revolution

3.1. Statistics and General Overview

Israel – also known as the start-up nation – seeks to boost the service level of its tourism industry through the exploitation of its advanced innovation ecosystem and the introduction of government incentives. The country also tries to meet the dynamically growing demand primarily by increasing the number of hotel rooms. In 2019, a record number of tourists (4.55 million people) arrived in the country, posing a significant challenge to accommodation and catering establishments. To expand hotel rooms, the government has introduced a financial support programme and measures to cut through red tape. In addition, it created an international investor platform. They also try to involve the so-called TravelTech start-ups, whose number exceeds 300 thanks to support by state and municipal actors, hubs, industry incubators, and large companies that have opened R & D & I centres in the country.

The Ministry of Tourism estimates that the national economy's revenue from tourism was 23 billion new Israeli shekels in 2019 – including 1.9 billion shekels in the busiest month, June. This is due, among other things, to the European Open Skies Agreement, which made low-cost airline flight launches to Israel much more competitive. In terms of source countries: the United States tops the list with 890,000 tourists, followed by France (338,200), Russia (296,000), Germany (268,000), the United Kingdom (218,700), and China (144,000).

As for Europe, 177,500 tourists arrived from the old continent in the busiest month, June 2019, which represents a 19 percent increase compared to numbers from the same period of the previous year. The largest boost can be seen in the number of visitors arriving from Germany (21,200 tourists, meaning +47 percent) and Portugal (2,000 tourists, which is +100 percent), comparing the statistics of June 2018 and June 2019. The main reason for the doubling of the Portuguese number is that TAP launched a direct flight to Tel Aviv.

According to the Israel Hotel Association, the most guest nights were recorded in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Although big cities are still the most popular among tourists, the number of guest nights in Tiberias along the Lake of Gennesaret showed an 18 percent increase in 2019 over the previous year. The number of nights booked increased by 9 percent in Tel Aviv and by 8 percent in Jerusalem. Overall, inbound and outbound passenger traffic at Ben-Gurion International Airport has more than doubled in the past decade. Ilan and Asaf Ramon International Airport (located north of Eilat) was opened in January 2019 and had already received more than one million people by January 2020.

3.2. Policy, Campaigns, and Incentives

3.2.1. National-Level Policies

As part of the Land of Creation brand, Israel started to use the slogan 'Goisrael', which is also the web address of a tourist information portal and the name of a mobile application developed by the Ministry of Tourism. Israel's Ministry of Tourism operates four offices in the United States, one in Canada, ten in Europe, three in Asia, and one in Brazil.

The municipality of Tel Aviv-Yafo has four tourist information centres in the most frequented places of the city. Its city brand is 'Tel Aviv Nonstop City', and its company dealing with city marketing, economic development, and the start-up ecosystem is Tel Aviv Global.

In 2018, Israel launched an international tourism campaign with the slogan 'Two Cities One Break'. The follow-up to the successful project was 'Tel Aviv & Jerusalem – Two Sunny Cities. One Break'. Its key element is a short video presenting a vacation spent in the cities of Tel Aviv and Jerusalem through Instagram

stories featuring Sian Welby, the famous British TV presenter. In addition, public billboards, posters on public transport vehicles, and other online and offline tools also facilitated the greatest possible exposure.

Israel's Ministry of Tourism organized its first conference titled *Israel Hotel Investment Summit* in November 2018. As Yariv Levin, Minister of Tourism said, Israeli tourism had broken records from several perspectives in recent years – thus, in order to meet the growing demand, it is important to provide a platform for international investors, real estate developers, and leading hotel chains. Their aim is to enable international players looking for business opportunities to launch projects together with Israeli entrepreneurs and property owners.

The annual flagship event of the Israeli tourism industry is the so-called *International Mediterranean Tourism Market (IMTM)*, which has already been held 26 times. International interest is well demonstrated by the fact that ministers of tourism from fourteen countries attended the meeting in 2019, the number of countries setting up an exhibition section was 57, and the event attracted nearly 27,000 participants – including 17,000 tourism professionals and 215 decision makers.

In order to increase the capacity of hotel accommodation, Israel's Ministry of Tourism created various incentives for the industry and its investors. The key elements of the complex action plan include financial support. The government provides a 20 percent contribution to the construction of new hotels and the expansion of existing ones; an additional 8 percent is added if low-priced accommodation is created and further 5 percent at the end of the calendar year if at least 25 percent of the hotel's revenue comes from tourist payments over an 18-month period in the first 3 years of operation. In addition to this support, several processes of investment planning and execution have been simplified through amendments to the Planning and Building Law.

3.2.2. Tel Aviv Municipal Tourism Policy

The Vision for 2030 of Tel Aviv Global & Tourism municipal company aims that the city will be one of the leading urban destinations in the world. By merging Jaffa and Tel-Aviv under one municipal entity, history, religion, and dynamic multiculturalism will be turned into an attractive and inspiring medley. 328 sunny days per year, 14-kilometer coastline with many public beaches, and the proximity of the holy sites, especially the Old City of Jerusalem, is a competitive advantage. Israeli policymakers and technology experts make great efforts to improve the quality and profitability of tourism. However, from an industrial perspective, many weaknesses and threats can be identified besides the strengths and opportunities. The number of hotels and rooms is below the demand, security fears and geopolitical situation have a great impact on inbound travel trends, the quality of service culture is not constant, and other further issues need to be resolved.

The policy paper defines 17 tourism zones about half of which are existing zones and the other half are zones that are planned to contain significant tourist activity in the future. The document places special emphasis on sustainable development, which takes into consideration the needs and sentiments of residents and involves them in the tourism development efforts. The municipality seeks to institute a mechanism for promoting tourism projects that will address the weaknesses of the city as a tourist destination. The Vision has a special focus on new market segments: senior tourists, tourists from Asia (mostly from China), and visitors from Muslim countries.

Table 1. *SWOT Analysis – Vision for 2030 Tel Aviv Tourism*

SWOT Analysis of the Vision for 2030 Tel Aviv Tourism Master Plan	
STRENGTHS – easy to access and read the document – policy makers are giving honest opinions – the paper contains valuable statistics – the master plan represents an ecosystem approach	**WEAKNESSES** – much of the valuable information is in the appendix – reference and planned actions with the booming travel tech industry of Israel and Tel Aviv are insufficient – there is no indication and strategy for emergency situations, e.g. war, pandemic, natural disasters, etc. – the core content has too much marketing material instead of, e.g., a policy paper
OPPORTUNITIES – the collection of projects in appendix is a great promotion material and opportunity for investors – findings can be challenged in the industry and academia – travel tech start-ups can identify problems to be solved and approach the municipality with their initiatives and solutions	**THREATS** – the change of political leadership can lead to the rejection of the policy paper – drastic budgetary measures can threaten the implementation – instability in the region and emergency situations

Source: authors' evaluation and findings

Critiques most often mentioned by tourists according to the study of Tel Aviv Municipality:
　　– The number of hotels and rooms is below the demand.
　　– Security fears and geopolitical situation have a great impact on inbound travel trends.
　　– The quality of service culture is not constant.
　　– Poor value for money.
　　– Taxis and public transportation are expensive and unreliable.
　　– The quality of information in foreign languages is poor.
　　– Tourists are not happy about the cleanliness of public areas.

Authors evaluated the policy document by using the framework of SWOT analysis. The method was based on the collection and analysis of primary and secondary sources as well as study visits and interviews in Tel Aviv. Further research should include the follow-up of the analysis, periodic evaluation, and providing feedback. Current barriers are the COVID-19 pandemic and the political and economic instability in the country.

3.3. TravelTech in the Israeli Innovation Ecosystem

The umbrella organization of the industry is called IITS – Israeli Traveltech Startups. It serves as a hub bringing together more than 300 start-up enterprises. Israel's largest conference on the subject is *TTI – Travel Tech Israel 2020*, which was planned to be held in Tel Aviv on 21 October this year.

They also have a corporate innovation centre called InnoVel in Tel Aviv, which focuses on the travel and hospitality industries. Its aim is to channel Israeli innovative solutions to corporate clients which can adapt these solutions in their operation and services. Its partners include but are not limited to global players such as booking.com, AirBnb, Hilton, Lufthansa, or Skyscanner. Several large companies in the industry have opened innovation and R&D centres in Israel. These include Booking.com, Boeing, or the Israeli national airline's programme called Cockpit Innovation.

The most important Israeli Travel Tech accelerator is EilatHub, which helps industry start-ups through its various programmes and platforms. It provides access to the largest hotel chains, airlines, and other important players. It supports pilot projects, offers office use, and runs both incubation and investment programmes.

Four companies out of the ten winners of World Tourism Organization's (UNWTO) 2018 start-up innovation challenge involving 3,000 start-ups were Israeli companies:

Refundit: offers a solution for VAT refunds.

Pruvo: if it finds cheaper hotel rates, it modifies the existing booking.

SeeVoov: an interactive video-based travel planner that uses artificial intelligence and deep learning to raise interest in different destinations and handles bookings.

Howazit: a platform that simplifies and facilitates communication between businesses in the tourism industry and tourists as well as a sales channel.

4. Start-Up Nation

Participants in the Israeli business and administration sector understood the importance of country branding and recognized that 'people (at least foreigners) think of a country in the same way as if they were thinking of a brand, whether

we are talking about travelling to that country or investing there' (PAPP-VÁRY 2019: 42).

Israel is the home of networks and hubs. This is no different with country branding – all actors whose profession is to develop a positive international perception of the 'start-up nation' are organized into informal and formal platforms. The spread of this image was facilitated by the contribution of a book published ten years ago, which has since been translated into more than thirty languages. *Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle* by Dan Senor and Saul Singer has been such a great success that many people visit the country because of this with the book in their hands. It is no exaggeration to say that a new kind of tourism has emerged driving crowds of businessmen and policymakers to visit Israel on study trips in hopes of making business deals and finding the secret sauce. In the international bestseller, authors Dan Senor and Saul Singer present how and why could the country – which was at the level of third world economies in the early 1950s – become an innovation centre. The book changed the country's public image worldwide, and it now includes concepts such as innovation and the cradle of business alongside conflict and politics.

In the book, the authors highlight two elements as keys to success – a conscious choice and development of economic structure and intensive country brand building. In connection with the latter, we must mention the Hebrew word hasbará (הַהְבְּסַה), which literally means 'explanation'. In practice, it refers to public relations efforts to present the perspective of the State of Israel and support the international acceptance of its political decisions. This tool is also present in cultural diplomacy and science diplomacy. In brand building, real performance reinforces the positive message, and the positive message also has its effects, increasing real performance.

The 'start-up nation' country brand has been created, which sees and shows the key to the country's success as the interaction of the following attributes:
- highly qualified people 'making aliyah', that is, Jews immigrating to the land of Israel;
- willingness to take risks;
- speed, flexibility, informal business culture, impatience;
- smart and intuitive young society;
- during the two or three years of compulsory military service for both men and women, young people aged 18–24 can work with the latest technology, and they must take decisions regarding life-and-death issues – after such a challenge, they are not afraid to take risk or improvise in business later;
- open communication: they often challenge hierarchy and supremacy – questions are answered with questions;
- at the same time, they accept new ideas, no matter what rank or position they come from within the organization;

– failure: even multiple failures are not a shame but are part of the learning process – it does not involve stigmatization;
– the size of the country results in a kind of test environment in all respects; it is not a market itself but an excellent springboard – they are already thinking about global sales when the business idea is born.

The bestseller also inspired the creation of one of the most important national branding organizations. Start-Up Nation Central is a non-profit organization maintained primarily by donations from philanthropic donors mostly from the United States, serving business development and country promotion purposes simultaneously.[1]

Other books presenting the recipe for Israel's economic rise and innovation superpower have also been written. These include New York Times and Los Angeles Times bestseller *Let There Be Water: Israel's Solution for a Water-Starved World* by Seth M. Siegel and *Thou Shalt Innovate: How Israeli Ingenuity Repairs the World* by Avi Jorisch.

Israel is truly a home for start-ups (and it is important to add: successful start-ups!) as well as innovation – this is also confirmed by statistics. Many factors, mostly formed as a result of the cultural worldview and special living conditions of the people living there, produce quickly and ingeniously adaptable, creative, risk-taking, highly qualified entrepreneurs and workforce. However, Israel's branding does not stop at the start-up nation: the official concept by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is already based on a broader foundation that goes beyond the economic sector: this is a 'creative energy' with three components: building the future, vibrant diversity, and entrepreneurial zeal.

5. The Jewish State –
A Conscious Strategy of Country Branding

As we have seen, in order to counter the long-standing globally negative image, country image professionals have made efforts to broaden the conversation. The

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1   Start-up Nation Central also has a significant contribution to the development of 'innovation tourism'. A large number of delegations visit the country from university students through delegations of large corporations seeking innovative solutions, ideas, and talent to politicians and state leaders. Each year the organization receives more than 60 groups of high-level business and political leaders and organizes complex programmes for them. China, Japan, India, the United States, African and Western European countries are the most interested in Israel's innovation ecosystem. Their target audience is perhaps the smartest choice possible – students from the best universities, politicians and decision-makers, businessmen, i.e. people who are prominent opinion leaders in their communities or will become ones in the future.

infrastructure responsible for local branding, which includes both state and NGO organizations, is briefly presented below (*Figure 1*).

Source: 'Brand Israel' presentation by Ran Natanzon, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Head of Division, Innovation & Brand Management, Media and Public Affairs

Figure 1. *The Israeli branding ecosystem*

5.1. State Actors – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Of all the interviews with state actors, the authors of this article highlight the interview with Ran Natanzon, Head of Innovation, Brand Management and Social Diplomacy Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), Israel (25 April 2018, MFA headquarters, Israel). The interview revealed that the central actor, the MFA, does not consider country branding as a tourism marketing issue – however, it works closely with the Ministry of Tourism. The MFA has recently created the 'Creative Energy' brand, while the Ministry of Tourism has created 'Land of Creation'. According to Natanzon, it is an important guiding principle that the messages should have a human dimension, provide a direct experience for the recipients, and create a kind of dialogue – they should not appear as one-sided slogans but build partnerships and use micro-marketing.

Narratives of the Israeli brand (*Figure 2*):
– building the future,
– vibrant diversity,
– entrepreneurial zeal.
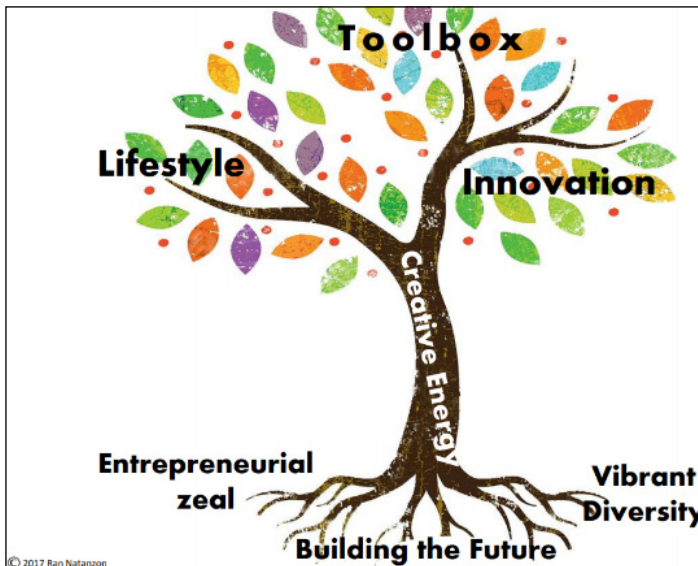
Source: 'Brand Israel' presentation by Ran Natanzon, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
Head of Division, Innovation & Brand Management, Media and Public Affairs

Figure 2. *The components of Israel's brand-building process*

These are accompanied by the elements of the special cultural environment presented in detail in the book *Start-up Nation* (SENOR–SINGER 2009): questioning hierarchy, accepting failure and unsuccessful attempt, can-do attitude.

The most important tasks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in this area include:
– Israel's country brand: developing strategic processes, creating the visual language of the brand;
– creation of policy documents for brand strategy;
– developing the ministry's network with the Israeli innovation ecosystem, promoting the interconnection of government institutions with key players in the high-tech sector;
– monitoring international and Israeli innovation trends;
– developing a programme for delegations from the international business press and media and drawing their attention to Israeli innovation;
– holding Israeli branding presentations for government and business actors, thus handing over key communication panels.

In the process of preparing its diplomats to be deployed, the MFA also places great emphasis on preparing people employed abroad for their contribution to country branding at their future stations with a focus on innovation and economy.

In addition, they seek to draw the attention of foreign diplomats accredited to Israel on programmes and actors deemed important by the MFA. For example,

their tools include the organization of innovation study tours with the aim of making participating diplomats report on the country's outstanding research and development achievements, conveying their willingness to cooperate, and providing a refined image of the country.
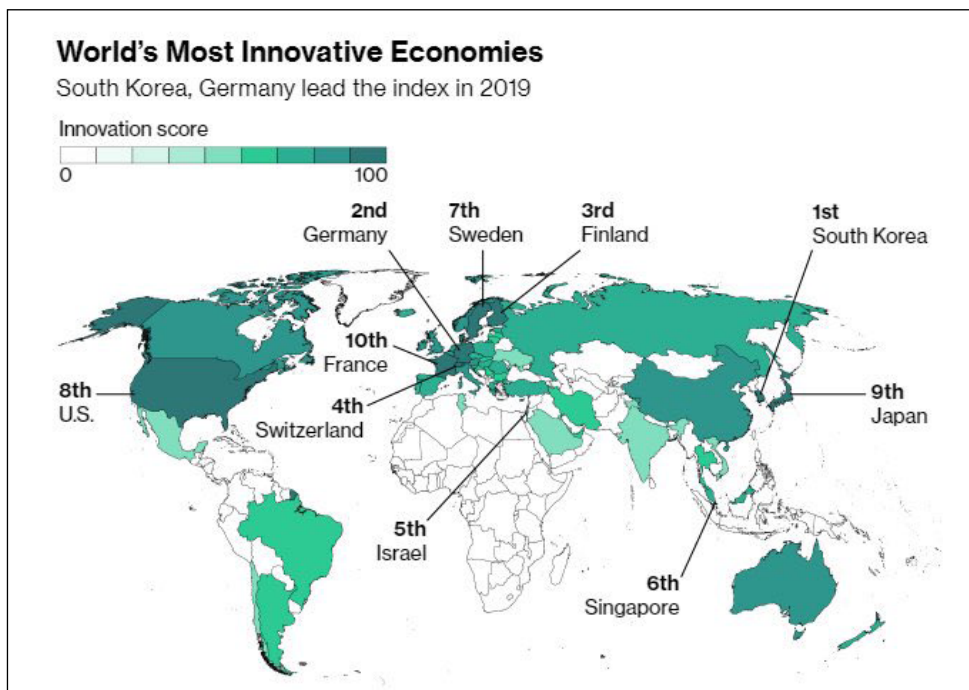
Figure 3. *The world's most innovative economies in Bloomberg's ranking*

Supporting events and inviting international delegations (even by supporting their participation in some form) is also a tool for the practice of innovation and country branding. Examples include the so-called Start Tel Aviv Competition, whose main partners are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Israel's foreign representations and the Tel Aviv-Yafo City Municipality. The annual call for proposals by embassies and their local partners is open to young people from abroad who have launched innovative entrepreneurial projects, already have a prototype, and would like to attend a fully funded, nearly one-week-long seminar related to the globally significant DLD – Digital Life Design Festival.

The MFA continuously monitors participation in various innovation rankings and results, which are actively communicated. Specific examples include, but are

not limited to, the Bloomberg Innovation Index (*Figure 3*) (5th place in a list of 50 countries) and the FutureBrand Country Index (22nd place in a list of a 75 countries).

5.2. Agency for International Development Cooperation (MASHAV)[2]

The agency belonging to Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been active since the 1950s. It initially dealt with the alleviation of hunger, disease, and poverty in the developing world through technology transfer and training. Today, MASHAV also cooperates with many countries in the developed world such as Hungary and other countries from the Visegrád Group (V4).

The Agency holds many of its programmes in Israel with hundreds of participants each year. Most of them gain lifelong experiences and are grateful for the study trip during which they receive a dense and intensive ready-made programme from logistics to professional elements with little leisure time. Upon landing at Ben-Gurion International Airport, the narrative is provided by MASHAV right from the participants' first impressions, thus contributing to conscious country brand building.

Development programmes implemented by the Agency outside the country (for example, in Africa) also reinforce the positive image that Israel contributes to its own development and that of its international partners by transferring world-class technology and knowledge. In addition to deepening the slogans 'Land of creation' and 'Creative Energy', these trainings always provide an excellent opportunity to present Israel's position on the Arab–Israeli conflict.

5.3. Nonstop City and Tel Aviv Global – Metropolis Region

Besides the 'Creative Energy' and 'Land of Creation' slogans with the related complex promotion strategies coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism, the 'Tel Aviv – Nonstop City' brand is also strongly present in the development of Israel's international image. According to a definition by the municipality, an extension of the city's vision is represented in it – they position themselves among the world's twenty leading global metropolises. They define innovation and the 'nonstop' character as a 'competitive identity' evident in all aspects of life and emphasize that there is much more real content behind it than just producing catchy slogans. In addition to developing communication panels and strategies, they are engaged in professional branding designed along five key values – pluralism, openness, freedom, innovation, urban creative energy –, which is indeed rich in programmes and projects. Moreover, the Tel Aviv brand combines five sub-brands, which also appear independently in many

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2   Agency for International Development Cooperation.

communication materials and campaigns. These are Jaffa Old City,[3] The First Hebrew City,[4] The White City,[5] Tel Aviv Gay Vibe,[6] and The Startup City.

The organization implementing the initiative originated in 2010 is Tel Aviv Global, a municipal non-profit company. Its most important objective is to position the city of Tel Aviv-Yafo as an international business centre specialized in innovation. Its diverse activities include event organizing, conducting online and offline promotional campaigns, implementing smart city projects, and performing policy tasks.

In the field of innovation, it also maintains an incubator called Library where start-up enterprises can rent a workstation and participate in professional and community events much cheaper than market rates. Their organization receives delegations of foreign experts and companies. However, they do not only focus outward – with the help of the so-called ITAY (Innovation Tel Aviv Yafo) Model, the work of the 12,000 people employed by the municipality and its companies is placed in a new, inspiring, proactive, and flexible framework. Tel Aviv Global is also a tourism marketing company, handling economic development and the increasing number of the incoming tourists in a complex way. In addition to meeting the needs of leisure visitors, the company also seeks to attract the attention of potential immigrants promising the greatest added value in creative economy.

5.4. Non-State Actors – Innovation Without Borders Group

Innovation Without Borders is an informal, non-governmental actor. However, the umbrella organization is supported by the state with material and intangible assets. It currently brings together diplomats from 39 countries, dealing with science, technology, and innovation matters, accredited in Israel. The regular, non-profit programmes offer an excellent opportunity for networking – free of charge or on a cost reimbursement basis. Furthermore, each session is opened by the presentations of invited Israeli businessmen, innovation experts, or government actors. IWB typically organizes its events on a monthly basis, but their frequency is increasing with events often taking place every two to three weeks. For diplomats accredited in Israel, IWB brings together the most important entrepreneurship programmes and accelerators for foreign people. They also provide an opportunity for delegates from each country to present their own country-specific needs to the

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3   It is the world's oldest port operating without interruption that has been active for five thousand years.
4   It is the very first city in the world where the renewed Hebrew language (also known as Modern Hebrew, or Ivrit) was spoken.
5   Referring to architecture, Bauhaus buildings, and white plasters.
6   They are proud to support gay communities, gay pride parades, and thriving gay communities – in addition to municipal 'thematic beaches', such as the orthodox and dog beaches, a 'gay beach' with rainbow-coloured pergolas was created.

NGOs' management during a personal consultation. Membership and participation in the programmes are free of charge.

5.5. The NoCamels and Israel21C Online Portals

The two most significant online portals presenting innovation, research and development news, and scientific breakthroughs in English are NoCamels and Israel21C.

The NoCamels brand responds to stereotypes about Israel with its name – it presents the region considered by many to be a deserted war zone that has lagged behind as a vibrant country being at the forefront of the world in terms of business and science. Although the 'international promotion of Israeli innovations' appears on the website as a mission, many articles refer to the Israeli origin of the invention only after reaching a certain reading time, also arousing interest and gaining reader recognition. This is a kind of conscious strategy that the operators of the online portal shared with the authors of this article during their meeting in the Herzliya campus of the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) at Raphael Recanati International School, founder and home to the NoCamels portal.

Israel21C and NoCamels are very similar portals, but the up-to-date content of the former one is also available in Spanish in addition to English. A special feature of Israel21C is that it runs a competition to select 'digital ambassadors' and support them by a financial scholarship. The difference compared to the NoCamels portal is that Israel21C does not have a university background, puts much more emphasis on presenting Israeli–American cooperation projects, and its articles and online content also include topics related to cultural, humanitarian, and everyday life.

6. Summary

Founded in 1948, just over seventy years ago, the state could hardly have achieved such results if its leaders had not used the tools of country branding and conscious economic development at the same time, without taking their eyes off the map for a moment when creating any new institution or strategy.

The resulting 'start-up nation' and 'land of creation' country brands and their communication platforms are well thought out and collected, taking into account the real values of the country. Following the establishment of a coherent system, it serves a variety of purposes, turning the country's scientific and business success into the impetus of tourism and politics.

Thanks to Israel's professional country branding, a part of the international public opinion, especially its formerly neutral or moderately pro-Israeli members, move closer and closer to the country and show attachment to it. As a result,

foreign politicians are increasingly willing to make gestures towards Israel. At the same time, pro-Israeli actors are also encouraged by the division of the Arab world and the relegation of the Palestinian question to the background because they can expect less intense focused international resistance from predominantly Muslim Arab and African countries, and they are not afraid of a significant shrinkage in their domestic voting bloc either.

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