



Technology Sparks Jordan's Capital Market Growth

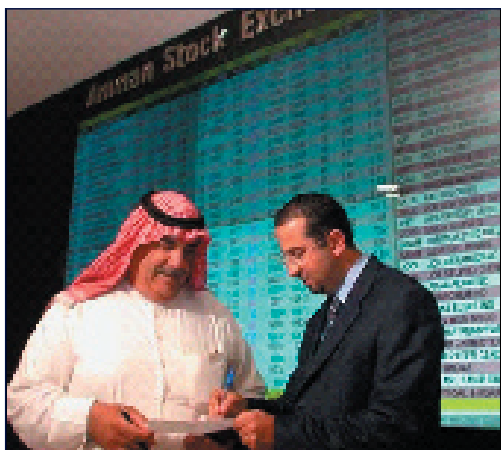


Photo: Bill Lyons

Traders work at the Amman Stock Exchange.

Trading volume on the Amman Stock Exchange rose by more than 85 percent in 2003, adding \$4 billion of wealth to the capital market.

At the Housing Bank Building in Amman, plasma screens display a steady stream of stock data to Jordanian investors. Down the hall in the investor gallery of the Amman Stock Exchange, a sixteen-foot-long video wall exhibits real-time market news and information to the public. Supplied by USAID, these information technology tools have helped transform Jordan's capital market from a manual system of trades and transactions using whiteboards and paper stock certificates into one using state-of-the-art technology.

Before the Amman Stock Exchange was modernized, brokers had to be on the trading floor to buy and sell, and used whiteboards to track trading activity. They bought and sold stocks using the "open outcry" system, gesturing and calling out stock prices to potential buyers. The system was error-prone, inefficient, laborious—and it limited trade volume.

Now the public face of Jordan's new high-tech capital market, the investor gallery displays the whiteboards as historical artifacts. Real-time trading and the instantaneous disclosure of market information have contributed significantly to educating investors and improving market confidence, leading in turn to increased participation from both Jordanian and international investors. In 2003, trading volume on the stock exchange rose by more than 85 percent, adding \$4 billion of wealth to the capital market.

Photo & Caption

