



**EXECUTIVE FORUM ON
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**EXPORT OF SERVICES: HYPE OF HIGH POTENTIAL?
IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGY- MAKERS**

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Proexport's Actions, Services for Entrepreneurs

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Services are essential in any economy. Their weight in the GDP and employment and its commerce dynamic has done all economies start valuing this sector that only some time ago was considered as "not settable" in economy texts.

The export of services took great importance in the developed world and some developing countries assumed that challenge and today they take advantage of the international market's great opportunities. Examples India and Ireland.

Exporting services changes the paradigms of goods' commercialization, specially because those are invisible and therefore not possible to be felt, being the key, then, the attainment of confidence that generates a purchase decision. The preparation of the exporter, the differentiation of its project or devises and the perseverance are key factors.

The National Government, conscious of the importance of potentializing the sector of services, has been working to design special mechanisms and to obtain similar conditions to the goods' exporters ones for the services' exporters.

Among other actions, since year 2000, the National Government implemented the National Record of Goods and Services' Exporters, by virtue of which some benefits established in please to exporters of goods have been extended to the exporters, as long as they register his contracts in the Ministry of Foreign Trade today Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism; for example, services rendered entirely outside, they do not have retention in the source and are excluded from IVA.

In the same way, competitiveness agreements were subscribed at their moment, looking for joint actions of the public and private sector in the sectors of engineering and consultancy services; services of software and related services; specialized services of health; pulp, paper and cardboard and connected industries (it includes graphical arts), international aerial transport of freight; services of logistic and terrestrial transport and tourism in San Andrés, Cartagena and Santa Marta.

On the other hand PROEXPORT designed a scheme of support for the special projects of services' export and restructured the Macrosector in charge of the promotion of such, which has come supporting it with the different instruments it has and whit criteria that correspond to the particularities of the same one, to the companies of services registered in the National Record of Goods and Services' Exporters and that assume the commitment to enter the currencies that they obtain by the export or to accredit the national currency entry, according to the modality of export used.

Although every services' exporters are attended in Proexport, the work have been bigger inside the following sectors: software and related services; engineering, consultancy and construction; audio-visuals, specialized services of health, education, editorial and graphical arts, potentialities have arisen throughout the time due to the entrepreneurs' initiatives who have detected market's niches for its services and with their job have achieved positions for them in the international markets.

Instruments Whereupon Count Proexport

With the purpose of being able to give greater coverage with the resources available we have come working in different fronts to take care of the different necessities of the industrialists and of the public in general:

Information

Proexport in collaboration with other organizations of foreign trade and chambers of commerce, attends through the Zeiky (information centers of foreign trade) and through a phone line many of the doubts that have the industrialists on proceedings and procedures.

With the purpose of having a more specialized approach was created Intlexport Services, it allows to consult through the Proexport internet page with the intention of giving some of the

information that always ask us the industrialists for. It is a guided search that takes the industrialist to the source of information of the country where he wants to make the consult. The coverage of all the variables for all the countries is not available, as it is a system based on links, there are only available the variables that were found. Also in that vestibule, was included a manual about export of services and another information that can interest to the exporters.

Recently, as result of an investigation made within the framework of the agreement Andean Program of Export of Technologies and Technological Services "(Colciencias, CAF and Proexport), "Exporte.org " was included as material of consultation the denominated document "Protocol of Negotiation" that allows the industrialists to study legally and commercially the different forms of commercializing its products or developments.

Qualification

During two years, within the framework of the exporter weeks that were made in several places of the country was included a talk on services' export, explaining the concept and motivating the industrialists to do it in a proactive form.

At the moment, through the Zeiky, basic seminaries are offered about export of services, that can be taken by any entrepreneur of the sector, according to the established program or by express request.

During the 2004, thanks to an agreement with the International Trade Center a seminary was held in January on "Successful Services Export" which was attended by more than 30 industrialists of software.

Market Studies

Conscious of the importance of knowing the demand of the world-wide sectorial profiles were made in the 2002 of several sectors in some of the interest countries, some of which were made in cooperation with the respective associations.

Conscious from the information necessity there have been made 22 studies of market, according with the requests and interest of the companies and thanks to the agreement with the BID-FOMIN in which they settle down the specific necessities of the sectors and in some are gotten to identify the commercialization channels. These studies have been spread through informative seminaries in which the participant industrialists can meet with the consultants who elaborated the studies and formulate specific questions. Those that are available can be consulted in the Web page.

Promotion and Commercialization

Proexport have been supporting the commercialization strategy of the Colombian companies of an active form for several years, through the different instruments whereupon it counts and giving support on specific requirements oriented to international sale.

The instruments used most frequently by the companies to enter new markets have been the one of commercial agendas, product launchings and participation in fairs among others. The objective of these activities has been the search of potential clients, distributors or strategic allies. The main difficulty faced by the companies has been the slowness with which the process of commercialization of this type of products is made, what makes necessary that the industrialist frequently travels to visit the potential clients to generate confidence and to press the purchase decision.

There is interaction with more than 400 companies, we have been accompanied and advised to many companies during these years having active at this moment more than 40 joint work plans detailed by market.

Wheel Of Businesses

With the purpose of giving a greater sectorial cap and knowing the necessities of the international buyers, in October of the 2004 Proexport, in associate with Fedesoft, carried out the first computer science technology wheel of businesses in which 72 national companies participated, 41 buyers (30 international) that in more than 650 commercial appointments originated possibilities of businesses of 11.3 million dollars.

Better Practices

For several years has come motivating to the companies to have a quality culture, indispensable to be competitive internationally. Proexport, through agreements with other public and multilaterals¹ organizations offers technical and financial support through operators. It began with the program for assuring of Quality - ISO 9000, to which 37 companies of the sector had joined, 28 of them had been certified. The resources destined to these companies are equivalent approximately to \$455.000.000.

In February of this year, a pilot CMMI, Capability Maturity Model Integration, of the Engineering Institute of the United States, program began, it tries to motivate and to sensitize over 300 companies in the adoption of production models of international standards for the industry of the technologies of information; to qualify national advisers and to support in the implementation and valuation on CMMI model to a group of five Colombian companies developers of software exporting or with high exporting potential.

The generation of national capacities has as intention to make possible the offer of this program to a greater number of Colombian companies to more reasonable costs in a near future. The project has a projected cost of \$1,400 million, of which 1,000 million are assumed by the Sena and Proexport.

Preparation Of The Exporting Companies Or With Exporting Potential

Additional to the support and preparation of the companies made through the macrosector, trough Expopyme and trough the Zeiky's seedbed, according with their exporting experience, within the framework of the agreement "Andean Program of Export of Technologies and Technological Services" (Colciencias, CAF and Proexport), "Experte.org" it comes advancing in the formulation and the operation of businesses plans for 27 companies of technological base of which around 50% are of software.

^{1/} Colciencias, Confecámaras (Agreement with BID-FOMIN), Icontec (Agreement with BID-FOMIN) and the Sena