WHAT MAKES A WINNER?
What Makes a Winner?

The 6th Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Network Awards were presented at the 2014 TPO Network World Conference, which took place in Dubai, United Arab Emirates from 3-5 November 2014. More than 400 participants from 68 countries gathered to address the theme, From Export Promotion to Internationalization – The role of TPO’s in the evolving global economy. Participants focused on the growing importance of TPOs in driving economic growth and supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) competitiveness in today’s rapidly changing global economy.

The TPO Network Awards are open to all national TPOs and recognize excellence in trade support services. The Awards celebrate TPOs that have demonstrated outstanding performance in the use of innovative and effective practices in export development initiatives that respond to the needs of SMEs to become sustainable, competitive international players.

Dubai Exports, the export promotion agency of the Department of Economic Development in Dubai, hosted the 2014 conference and awards under the patronage of the Crown Prince of Dubai, H.H. Sheik Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, who is also the Chairman of the Dubai Executive Council. It was the first time the TPO Network World Conference was held in the Middle East.

The four categories for the Awards, determined by the 2014 Adjudicating Panel, were:

- Best TPO from a Small Island Developing State
- Best TPO from a Least Developed Country
- Best TPO from a Developing Country
- Special Mention Award

THE 2014 WINNERS

- **Mauritius**: Best TPO from a Small Island Developing State (Enterprise Mauritius)
- **Zambia**: Best TPO from a Least Developed Country (Zambia Development Agency)
- **Colombia**: Best TPO from a Developing Country (PROCOLOMBIA)

Special Mention

In the Developed Country category, the panel of judges accorded Special Mention Awards to two TPOs for their efforts to promote youth employment and skills development by placing young workers with internationally-oriented companies.

- **Lithuania** – Enterprise Lithuania
- **Spain** – ICEX Spain Trade and Investment
DEFINING AND SHARING THE HIGHEST STANDARDS

The application process and structure of the awards criteria facilitate the work of the Adjudicating Panel to identify and recognize good practices. This in turn contributes to the constant improvement TPOs undertake to raise the level of standard practice.

The application process is structured to identify excellence in terms of the impact the TPO achieved and innovative good practices employed to achieve the positive results. Public recognition of these practices is one way of identifying, supporting and sharing the highest standards from which all TPOs can benefit.

The 2014 TPO Network Awards’ applicants showcased their highest achieving export development initiatives. Three TPOs were recognized for their outstanding national efforts and two received special mention awards for their dedication to building export leaders of the future. Each applicant demonstrated a unique approach to the common activities that TPOs must undertake to select, conceptualize, develop and measure the impact of their initiatives. The winners were selected on the basis of their innovativeness and thoroughness of their approach and the impact they were able to demonstrate as a result of their practices.

All applicants described the hard work they undertake to understand and mitigate the challenges faced by SMEs in their journey to becoming – and remaining – competitive exporters.

TPOs are constantly challenged to track their impact. However, tracking the impact of export development initiatives can be difficult due to the intangible changes that often occur as a result of the programmes. Thoughtful approaches to tackling this issue were demonstrated by many applicants. The application process itself has stimulated TPOs to review their approaches to track and monitor results. Many applicants are taking a more structured approach to recording and analysing these results to learn from them and improve their services offers.

WHY THE AWARD?

The TPO Network Awards are open to all trade support institutions that are officially recognized as national organizations for trade promotion. An Adjudicating Panel comprised of TPO practitioners, including senior representatives of former winners, reviews the applications.

These prestigious biennial awards are recognized by TPOs worldwide as well as by the business community, governments and international agencies.

Previous winners and applicants agree the application process is a comprehensive and time-consuming task. But the benefits of winning and of applying exceed their expectations.

Benefits of participating in the TPO Network Awards include:

- News of the TPO’s participation can be used for national public relations purposes, to demonstrate its effectiveness to policymakers and boost its influence with stakeholders;
- Peer recognition;
- Winners are entitled to use the TPO Network Award winner logo on all corporate communications;
- Winners feature prominently on the TPO Network website (www.tponetwork.net) and in ITC’s promotional activities;
- Learning and improvement through knowledge sharing among staff members and TPO to TPO exchanges.
I would like to congratulate all applicants for the 2014 TPO Network Awards. This edition of the awards recognized excellence in export development initiatives, focusing on supporting SMEs to go global and internationalize. The Adjudicating Panel faced difficult choices among so many inspired initiatives.

This year’s TPO Network Awards recognize those innovative and forward-thinking TPOs that understand where the export opportunities lie and how to target their market access strategies. TPOs and their clients need the right market intelligence and the right networks. To be successful they must navigate through complex regulatory environments in a business-friendly and efficient manner.

These Awards recognize outstanding TPOs that assist SMEs use trade to drive sustainable, inclusive growth. By making modest investments, TPOs and their partners, including ITC, create truly transformational impacts. Tapping into international production networks can revolutionize prospects for SMEs and their workers. By supporting SMEs to make these connections, TPOs help create jobs and opportunities that lead to growth and development, benefitting their countries and their trade partners.

Our TPO winners are truly ‘best in class’. They are delivering real value to their customers and they are helping their peers improve by sharing best practices that enhance trade-related technical assistance worldwide.

As the linkages between trade and investment grow stronger, the role played by TPOs will only become more critical. Trade and investment have become intertwined. ITC research shows that since 2000, more than 60% of trade promotion bodies have merged with investment promotion agencies. This trend is set to continue and we will work with the TPO Network to monitor developments and support them to tailor their service delivery accordingly.

Innovation and dedication to a sustainable impact was how the Adjudicating Panel determined the winners of this year’s TPO Awards. I would like to once again congratulate the winners – as well as those who applied. Showcasing how you are making a difference strengthens the entire TPO Network.

What makes a winner? showcases the sixth round of the TPO Network Awards, first held in 2004. The awards are more than a sign of appreciation from your peers. They are confirmation of your performance to deliver export development initiatives with concrete outcomes and impact.

Congratulations again to the 2014 winners! I also wish you all the very best over the next two years in the lead up to the 2016 TPO Network World Conference and Awards, to be hosted by the Moroccan Centre for Export Promotion - Maroc Export.
There are academic programmes for SMEs, but no one was doing the actual, practical handholding. Go-Export is different because it facilitates a practical transfer of knowledge in the export value chain.

Devendranath Chamroo
Chief Executive Officer, Enterprise Mauritius (until December 2014)

Enterprise Mauritius, a three-time award winner, was recognized for its Go-Export programme, which builds on the capacity of SMEs to become export ready. Enterprise Mauritius identified the weaknesses of SMEs that were unable to capture export markets and then designed an initiative to support them to expand their businesses. A key challenge confronting Mauritian companies is access to affordable financing to fulfill increased export orders and expand their operations. In addition, some companies required technical assistance to improve their operations, infrastructure, factories and production facilities to meet market access requirements.

ADDRESSING TRADE-RELATED WEAKNESSES

SMEs are a key driver of the Mauritian economy – contributing to 39% of gross domestic product and accounting for 54% of employment. The government introduced a suite of policies to support the sector, but an analysis determined that the rate of success in SMEs’ ability to increase and fulfill their export orders was disappointing.

Before Go-Export was launched in 2013, Enterprise Mauritius (EM) embarked on an ambitious, structured research programme to determine the trade-related weaknesses of SMEs in several sectors. This preparatory research identified the needs of Mauritian SMEs.

Their main weaknesses were the low level of preparedness of entrepreneurs who could not successfully manage the complexities of international trade; the enterprises were not structured to meet the demands of international buyers; and the products lacked market adaptability.

Research also included a comprehensive review of support services offered to SMEs by national and international public and private sector agencies. According to the review committee, the available service support was strong in academic learning but weak in the type of practical hands-on training that is needed to build competitive exporting SMEs.

DEVELOPING THE PROGRAMME

Go-Export was developed in response to the information found by the review committee. To assess the specific and immediate needs of SMEs, EM also drew on first-hand information on the performance of all SMEs participating in EM’s overseas promotion campaigns. Intelligence was gathered from business development officers, foreign buyers, overseas liaison officers and facilitators in different African countries, experienced local exporters and participants in post-event debriefing meetings.

These findings were discussed in focus groups with SMEs and business experts to explore how best to address the identified weaknesses and knowledge gaps of export-ready companies.
Go-Export was designed to provide a practical knowledge transfer programme with real-time simulations of activities. SMEs apply their knowledge with the support of mentors and coaches who are reputed personalities in the Mauritian industrial landscape, which is an invaluable resource for SMEs.

Go-Export offers an interactive training platform combining classroom workshops, group meetings, role-playing, test applications, factory visits and one-on-one sessions with mentors and coaches. The programme aims to:

- Equip 20 SMEs each year with skills required to export on a sustainable basis;
- Change managerial behaviour to better meet export markets demands;
- Broaden the Mauritian export base by meeting international standards of quality, price, packaging and product diversity;
- Increase Mauritius’ market share in Africa;
- Increase the number of Mauritian exporters;
- Build EM’s capacity to conduct similar training programmes.

Twenty SMEs showing the greatest export potential were selected to participate in the 2013 Go-Export programme. They were selected through a rigorous audit and assessment of their capabilities in six key areas: the company’s current strategy, its markets, manufacturing system, operation and production facilities, its financials and human resources capacity. The assessment identifies the company’s export strengths and weaknesses and offers recommendations on how to overcome them.

The programme consists of modules conducted by well-respected local industry experts, including factory managers, bankers, freight forwarders, marketing consultants, brand experts, senior officers from government ministries, and retired CEOs. The classroom instruction is followed by onsite factory visits by the mentors and EM staff to observe implementation and improvements.

**KEY FACTORS BOOSTING EXPORTERS**

EM’s collaborative approach was designed to push enterprises towards export. Go-Export is a TeamEM initiative and engages the organization as a whole and is supported by EM’s parent ministry, its network partners and other trade support institutions.

Go-Export enables participants to enhance their way of doing business and reduce the gaps that prevent them from internationalizing. The mentoring style is more of a coaching nature than academic and the course is very practical. Entrepreneurs who managed to export understood and applied what they learned, including:

- The right leadership skills;
- How to adopt their products to the targeted market;
- Product costing, including determination of mark up to remain competitive in the targeted market;
- How to develop their manufacturing capabilities to meet customer requirements.

Participants were also encouraged to attend trade promotion events organized by EM.
What Makes a Winner?

Monitoring and Evaluating for Continuous Improvement

The Go-Export monitoring and evaluation framework allows EM, the mentors and the trainers to check the robustness of the initiative’s design, its relevance, implementation results and overall effectiveness.

Clearly defined performance indicators allow EM to identify and measure the impact of the programme on beneficiaries. Assessment was performed halfway through and at the end of the programme to effectively measure the change in export readiness of each participant.

The information gathered while tracking the progress and success of the beneficiaries along with their feedback provided critical information to improve the 2014 edition of Go-Export.

Empowering Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises for Export

The Go-Export programme is one of EM’s flagship export development initiatives, in line with the organization’s Strategic Plan 2013–2015, designed to strengthen the readiness of SMEs to successfully develop and grow sustainable export businesses. The programme reinforces EM’s strategic goals by ensuring a continuous supply of sustainable exporters, which in turn makes it more efficient and effective in meeting clients’ needs.

In its first year Go-Export showed impressive results. Five beneficiary SMEs shipped exports valued at approximately US$ 400,000. Eight beneficiaries are finalizing export orders of approximately US$ 165,000. Two companies made significant investments in new technology and are now ready to export.

Overall, Go-Export participants have improved their products in terms of quality, standards compliance, packaging and innovation. An important outcome is that beneficiaries no longer consider export as an ad hoc extension of their domestic business. All participants have improved their level of export readiness by re-engineering their administration, infrastructure and resources.

Important Outcomes in Government Policymaking

Go-Export’s success also led to important outcomes in government policymaking. The government has extended grants for SMEs to participate in trade fairs and introduced freight subsidy and export insurance guarantee schemes for exports to African countries.

The Go-Export training programme is now fully integrated into EM’s service offering as a registered Export Development Centre with the Mauritius Qualifications Authority. The government refunds participants 70% of the programme’s costs. This will promote the sustainability of the programme. Importantly, EM has updated its Business Registration Card (issued by the Registrar of Companies) to better meet the needs of today’s exporters by including training into its export development service offers.

Lessons Learned

Go-Export is replicable and EM is willing to show other TPOs hands-on how the programme works. EM learned valuable lessons during the development and roll-out of Go-Export, including:

- Collaboration across the organization and with stakeholders is key;
- Adopt a holistic approach to achieve a defined goal;
- Always respond to the needs of stakeholders in service delivery in a way that reflects the mission of your organization;
- When prescribing solutions, the desired results should be clearly defined;
- Make the beneficiaries the centre of the project;
- Communicate to the beneficiaries that the project is designed exclusively for them and how it could transform their organizations.
What Makes a Winner?

IDENTIFYING growth-oriented non-traditional export sectors and addressing specific needs of these exporters is important. In our journey to becoming a winner, good governance, accountability and transparency have increased export capacity across sectors.

Jonathan Simwawa
Director Export Development, ZDA

The Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) was awarded for its Zambia Export Development Fund, which provides low-interest loans to producer associations in non-traditional sectors. Support from the fund has enabled firms to enter new export markets in the region and beyond, creating job opportunities and generating income.

ZEDEF aims to help firms meet the challenge of securing pre- and post-shipment export finance. The fund makes low-interest loans to producer associations in non-traditional export sectors, including leather, coffee, handicrafts, mining, timber, organic products, gemstones and crocodile products. The loans enable exporters to invest in extra production to meet large export orders, which would not have been possible without the financing.

Since 2011, ZEDEF issued nine loans valued at US$ 1,511,938 and £285,000 to six exporting producer associations. The fund has propelled exporters into export markets in the region and abroad, creating employment and generating income.

The producer associations serve as monitoring mechanisms for their members and, as the borrowers, are responsible for repaying the loans.

ZEDEF’s objectives are ambitious. It aims to:
- Enable Zambian SMEs to sustainably enter export markets;
- Provide export financing;
- Encourage value-addition activities on primary exports to increase export earnings;
- Stimulate investment in exports in sectors where Zambia has comparative and competitive advantages.

EXTRACTION

BEST TPO FROM A LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY

ZAMBIA DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
HOW IT WORKS

Short-term loans are available for pre-shipment costs of procuring raw materials and equipment, and for post-shipment costs of salaries and other operating expenses. Medium-term loans are available for production and seasonal imports.

The producer associations, as borrowers, take full responsibility for the loans and undertake to repay ZEDEF in full and on time. The association signs a formal declaration of responsibility, which ensures a revolving sustainable arrangement. The objective is to ensure that ZEDEF remains a successful revolving fund in the selected sectors.

The fund is kept at a reputable and registered financial institution in Zambia under two accounts – a main loan account and an interest account. This facilitates easy monitoring of repayments of loans. If the fund is co-mingled with principal and interest, monitoring becomes a challenge.

ZEDEF has a separate Management Board from that of ZDA, which provides policy direction to ZEDEF Management to run the fund independently. Transparency and accountability are enhanced by subjecting ZEDEF to an annual audit six months after the end of each financial year or more frequently as may be required by the Board.

AUDIT REVEALS CHALLENGES

A number of ZEDEF beneficiaries face difficulties in executing their operational and export obligations. In 2013, the Loans Approval Committee undertook five key monitoring and evaluation missions to give board members first-hand information on the impact of the low-interest credit on beneficiary associations in the areas of job creation, export performance and income generation.

A ZDA audit, designed to reduce potential loan defaults, revealed that companies faced many challenges, including:

- Production of sub-standard products that fail to penetrate export markets;
- Lack of consistent export orders from regional importers;
- Insufficient knowledge about export procedures, documentation and how to keep financial accounts;
- Inability to write a business plan and prepare books and accounts.

PARTNERING TO BUILD CAPACITY

In response to these challenges, ZDA together with partners, launched several initiatives to build export capacity, particularly among Zambian micro-enterprises and SMEs. Beneficiaries of these measures and ZEDEF loans have experienced significant growth in their workforces and exports.

The Train for Trade training programme, in collaboration with the German development agency GIZ, gave ZEDEF beneficiaries an opportunity to develop skills in marketing, finance, insurance, quality management, transport and logistics. More than 100 companies have received training in how to seize export opportunities.
Over the past 12 years, this programme has helped companies showcase at the Southern African International Trade Exhibition, one of the biggest business events on the continent. Business generated as a result is more than US$ 1.4 million in goods and services.

WORKING WITH THE SWEDISH NATIONAL BOARD OF TRADE

This programme, in partnership with the Swedish National Board of Trade, trained more than 40 exporters in the areas of rules of origin and trade facilitation. Selection of participants was done carefully; 50% of the participants were ZEDEF Fund beneficiaries.

CREATING BUSINESS LINKAGES

Over the last few years, ZDA has been implementing a business linkages programme to stimulate commercial solutions to identify real market opportunities for SMEs within value chains.

The programme has assisted ZEDEF beneficiaries to tap into the local market through supplying their products to the large established enterprises. So far, the programme has been a success and has engaged a number of SMEs.

ZDA launched market research studies in neighbouring countries aimed at identifying potential importers of Zambian products. Studies included Angola, the Great Lakes region, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Africa and Mozambique. As a result, 20 companies participated in trade fairs and missions in Angola, DRC and South Africa.

ALIGNING WITH THE COUNTRY’S OBJECTIVES

ZEDEF and ZDA’s integrated approach has supported beneficiaries to enter export markets within the region and abroad. This export development initiative is helping to meet Zambia’ objectives to:

- Strengthen the country’s export support network by upgrading the level, quality and accessibility of export development services provided and by making them more responsive to the private sector needs and priorities;
- Deepen access into existing markets and diversifying into new markets;
- Increase the competitiveness of Zambia’s exports by increasing the volumes and quality of exports with value-added content and access to distribution and marketing networks;
- Expand the export production base by increasing the number of firms involved in export activities, with particular attention to micro-enterprises and SMEs.

“The Fund helped us recapitalize Esquire Roses. As a result we have become successful exporters of cut roses into Europe from Zambia. Increased export revenue has enabled us to expand our operations and we are now employing more people. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the ZDA for managing the Fund in a professional and transparent manner.”

Boniface Phiri
Managing Director, Esquire Roses
The value-added information generated by the methodology supports entrepreneurs to develop competitive processes that enable profitable exports. The TPO Network Award recognizes and acknowledges a team that is working towards internationalizing Colombian entrepreneurs.

Maria Claudia Lacouture
President, ProColombia

ProColombia was awarded for its Selling Methodology 2.0 (PSM 2.0), aimed at increasing textile and apparel exports to the United States. PSM 2.0 is based on business intelligence processes and value-added strategies designed to maximize the sustainable competitive advantages of Colombian SMEs.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF A NEW TRADE LANDSCAPE

The 100-year-old textile and apparel industry in Colombia includes everything from producing raw materials to distributing and exporting finished products. The sector represents more than 12% of industrial gross domestic product share and almost 2.3% of the country’s total export volume.

The sector includes more than 30,000 companies – 91% are microenterprises with fewer than 10 employees comprising members from about 4 million families. Most of the workers are women. The industry’s value chain is vital because its links are rooted in domestic production and are labour intensive.

Since 2005, when export quotas to the United States were eliminated, the industry was suffering in the face of competition from Asian countries. In 2009, exports of textiles and apparel continued their downward trend as a result of the exchange rate and the financial crisis.

The 15 May 2012 US-Colombia Free Trade Agreement (FTA) offered the sector new opportunities, but also created challenges for SMEs. In response, ProColombia developed an innovative initiative to reboot the sector in the new trade landscape.

PSM 2.0 (ProColombia’s Selling Methodology 2.0) is designed to assist Colombian companies to adopt new methods, recognize trends, develop new value propositions attractive to the US market and create sustainable competitive advantages using effective business intelligence.

SPARKING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

PSM 2.0 is a departure from ProColombia’s traditional methodology. It includes a qualitative analysis of demand while adapting potential products and services, which are salient elements when compared with the previous approach.

PSM 2.0 allows for better tools to be employed in the supply and demand analysis, in identifying the export potential of a product, in closing the gaps and in creating effective market entry strategies.

ProColombia’s infrastructure includes advisers working out of 27 Information Centers in eight regional offices who are critical to the process of identifying products and services, as well as the needs of Colombian businesses. Market analysts collect and distribute information on added value, while business advisers in 30 countries gather market information and provide support as a sales team.

This new methodology encourages the different areas of the organization to collaborate and work more efficiently through standardized procedures and integrated methodologies.
IDENTIFYING THE GAPS

Using studies and reports, key strategic failures were identified that the industry had to overcome to participate more actively in international markets, especially in the United States, including:

• Limitations related to the size of companies;
• Low levels of investment;
• High production costs;
• Failure to generate value-added products in primary links of the supply chain.

Visits were made to the companies working in the industry in the different regions of the country, which revealed that they did not have enough information about global trends, business opportunities, production technologies, product development and quality certification, among other things.

A RIGOROUS METHODOLOGY

One of the strengths of the methodology is its modular structure, which is designed to accompany participating companies, primarily micro-enterprises and SMEs, from the beginning to the end of the internationalization process. This continuous support follows a sophisticated methodology that guides the participant in developing products that meet the market needs according to the trends and requirements of consumers. It also enables them to create value-added strategies that build sustainable competitive advantages.

PSM 2.0 comprises four modules. In the first module, opportunities were identified for a wide range of products. The information was categorized by product and demand and evaluated for each US state. This specialized market intelligence was relayed to entrepreneurs through seminars, publications and online content. In 2012, this attracted more than 13,500 business owners from 29 cities; in 2013, there were more than 14,000 participants from 37 cities.

The second module identifies suppliers in the textile and apparel industry, validating the potential for export through meetings and counseling conducted by ProColombia’s Information Centers. Companies are assessed for eligibility in PSM 2.0 based on the following: they must be established for at least two years, have a product that is in demand globally, have sufficient production capacity and domestic market experience. If an applicant does not meet these criteria, ProColombia advises the company where to find support in strengthening its business processes.

In the third module, companies participate in exploratory missions to learn about market requirements and evaluate their supply capabilities. This real-world exercise involves analysing trends, customs and export standards, prices, packaging, labeling, regulations and distribution channels, as well as meeting experts and buyers.

After identifying export-ready companies, individual needs, market opportunities and product/market validations, the fourth module focuses on adapting supply to close identified gaps in marketing, production and sales. At this stage, the Exportable Textile and Apparel to the United States Adequacy Program is combined with the development of commercial action plans. The Adequacy Program, a capacity building initiative designed to address the gaps identified, worked with 131 companies.
Once the specific areas for improvement are identified for each company, ProColombia works with it to design and implement an action plan to improve export competitiveness and meet the expectations of US buyers. The action plan covers the whole value chain from human resources to technical improvements.

**ADAPTING TO SME CAPACITY**

The Adequacy Program is designed to last between eight and nine months. A review revealed the need to refine the programme content to maximize the impact in terms of timeframes. A ‘light’ Adequacy Program was then created for the textiles and apparel industry with a shorter duration of three months. This allows companies to close the product gaps and seize market opportunities more quickly.

**SUCCESSFULLY CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION**

The first success of PSM 2.0 was to adjust the product gaps of more than 50% of participating companies that had not exported previously, enabling them to provide good-value products consistent with clients’ requirements. PSM 2.0 improved value for US clients and at the same time had a substantial impact on the companies’ commercial practices, making them more sustainable over time.

PSM 2.0 has achieved significant results:

- Between 2012 and the first quarter of 2014, five exploratory missions were conducted with 95 companies participating.
- Forty-eight companies in the programme participated in the 50th Business Matchmaking Forum, one of ProColombia’s most important commercial activities.
- Thirty-seven companies reported 74 US export business opportunities, and 18 concluded deals with US clients for US$ 697,855.
- Ninety-five per cent of participating companies report they are pleased with the results and 99% say they would attend other ProColombia seminars.

**LESSONS LEARNED**

PSM 2.0’s success in the textile and apparel sector demonstrates that this approach can work in other sectors and is a model for other TPOs to consider as they create opportunities for micro-enterprises and SMEs to internationalize.

ProColombia points out that one of the biggest challenges facing TPOs is that the global context is changing rapidly due to many factors, including e-commerce, global value chains and evolving trade policy. As a result:

- TPOs need to continually adapt their services to the needs of their clients at home and abroad and they remain at the forefront of the changing global environment and the needs of consumers.
- TPO’s must provide companies with a complete package of tools and effective support to take advantage of the opportunities ahead.
- Each initiative and each participating company should be monitored from beginning to end.

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**We learned about costs, product analysis, packaging and branding. Then we participated in the 50th Business Matchmaking Forum, where we got to know potential customers, mainly from Texas. Two months later we closed our first and second deals to the United States with a couple of these businesses. We are thankful for all of the training, for our first and second export deals and for what we hope to do in the future.**

Manager, La Salve
We believe the Wings programme is the beginning of a new trend in people and business development, through focusing on regions and creating opportunities for young skillful professionals to demonstrate their knowledge in action.

Simona Gailiunaite
Head of Human Resources, Enterprise Lithuania

Enterprise Lithuania was awarded for its Wings programme, which is addressing Lithuania’s demand for adequately trained, professional export managers. Wings matches talented young people with experienced private sector export project managers. It also provides them with training, which at once addresses high youth unemployment and bridge the skills gap.

**FOCUSING ON REGIONS AND RURAL AREAS**

Wings targeted SMEs with just a few years of export experience with small or non-existent export departments. Companies located in regional cities were prioritized.

Regions exported only 31.8% of goods and mineral products produced in Lithuania in 2013 while the three biggest counties exported 68.2%. In 2013, unemployment levels in the regions were about 1.6 times higher than in the three biggest counties.

Enterprise Lithuania was convinced that focusing on regions rather than on specific sectors would have a considerable impact on SMEs’ management practices, new export development methods and the growth of a qualified workforce.

Great SME interest was demonstrated when 68 companies applied for the pilot programme – 16 were selected to employ one of 16 Wings participants. Companies involved in IT, the food industry, wood furniture, textiles and lasers participated, reflecting the country’s strong sectors.
DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL EXPORT MANAGERS

Enterprise Lithuania looked for university-educated young people who were motivated, inspired and capable of learning and developing on the go. In the pilot, 16 participants were selected out of 118 candidates to work with experienced, private sector export project managers and take training courses and seminars at Enterprise Lithuania.

Following the training, participants began working as project managers within their companies. In addition to providing the training, Enterprise Lithuania covered 60% of the young leaders’ salaries and provided the necessary tools including computers and telephones.

Mentors within the companies were assigned to each participant. Evaluations were carried out every two months to determine intermediate goals, review if the goals reflect the company’s current situation and to discuss next steps.

The training programme provided by Enterprise Lithuania involved 11 modules covering export development knowledge delivered by foreign and Lithuanian lecturers. Tests were regularly given to assess the change in knowledge and skills of the participants. If results were lower than 80%, participants were required to review the materials and repeat the test.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT

Wings has reported successes – so much so that there is now regional interest in replicating this unique government-business partnership. The impact was assessed through qualitative interviews with participating SMEs and onsite visits. These interviews revealed:

- Changes in managerial practices – 80% of participating companies realized the need for performance management systems, including identifying clear and targeted key performance indicators. Companies appreciated the competences plans, which clarified expectations with employees.
- There was heightened awareness of the need for greater professionalism in entering new markets, export practices and cooperation with potential customers.
- Participating companies recognized the need to recruit young people to work in export markets who are motivated, goal oriented, potential leaders and fluent in foreign languages.

“Wings is very suitable for regions where businesses face the lack of highly skilled employees. We have an opportunity to employ a highly motivated participant who took on additional responsibilities to expand the company’s exports. She is goal oriented, a fast learner and highly motivated. We do recommend other SMEs to participate in the project.”

Neringa Gailiunaite
Managing Director, UAB Viking Industrier
What Makes a Winner?
We believe that human capital is key, especially in our business. It is people who go for the goals of internationalization. In the end, you need people in the driver’s seat.

Francisco J. Garzón
Chief Executive Officer, ICEX Spain Trade and Investment

Spain Trade and Investment was awarded for its Young Professional Program, which since 1974 has enabled young graduates to work at Spanish companies that are growing internationally.

Like many countries in Europe, Spain has been working hard to tackle its unemployment rate, particularly for young people. The need to train people in the field of internationalization has been a priority for Spain’s trade policy even before ICEX was created as a TPO.

Over its 40-year history, the Young Professional Program (YPP) has trained more than 5,500 young graduates to work at Spanish companies that are internationalizing. Currently, ICEX invests over €11 million annually in the YPP and covers between 50–100% of the costs of the four-year scholarship.

Stage 1 consists of one year of training in the network of Trade Commission Offices in Spanish embassies. Stage 2 provides on-the-job training in international Spanish companies or multilateral organizations. YPP’s principal objectives include:

- Overcoming structural deficits in human capital specializing in international business management;
- Imparting knowledge of Spanish government instruments supporting the internationalization process;
- Providing training in areas of internationalization, including foreign trade, project management, multilateral tenders, investments and information technology.

Approximately 1,800 candidates apply annually. YPP’s training process has improved over time and has become increasingly structured and uniform. The ISO 9001:2008 quality certification since 2011 confirms ICEX’s commitment to the programme and ensures transparency and equal opportunities for candidates at every stage.

The selection process consists of various assessments and culminates with a Master’s course in International Business Management from Menéndez Pelayo International University.

A high level of satisfaction and employability

Surveys of former trainees in 2008 and 2011 measured their level of satisfaction. The results were very positive both subjectively in graduates’ assessment of the scholarship experience and objectively in terms of their employability. Their unemployment rate was significantly lower than other young people of the same age group.

According to the data gathered by the Spanish Labor Force Survey (EPA) and the Spanish Statistics Institute, former trainees with less experience (from 2011) showed a higher rate of unemployment at 9.7%, but this was still significantly lower than the 19% average for young people of the same age.

YPP is specifically designed to address Spain’s structural lack of human capital specialized in international business management. Companies clearly understand the need for YPP. As Spanish companies have become increasingly globalized, YPP has been offering them more qualified and versatile human resources.
Another indicator of YPP’s effectiveness is the significant demand from companies and institutions in the second stage of the programme. During 2014, YPP received more than 700 applications from nearly 500 companies competing for one of the 181 available trainees.

The perfect interface between companies and ICEX

Companies recognize they need specific knowledge of all of the instruments to promote trade and support internationalization that are offered by the Spanish government. In this way, YPP is becoming the perfect interface between Spanish companies and ICEX because trainees understand the various support instruments that best meet companies’ needs.

This knowledge strengthens the internationalization process of the companies in which they ultimately work. Trainees meet companies’ demand for more sophisticated profiles and offer expertise in foreign trade, project management, development of tenders held by multilateral organizations, investment (including tax and company legislation) and information technology.

‘You need people in the driver’s seat’

ICEX maintains YPP is its most cherished programme. It recognizes that human capital is key, especially in the trade promotion and development business.

For the past three years I have had the great opportunity to benefit from an ICEX scholarship, undoubtedly one of the best academic programmes for professional and personal development that is available in our country nowadays. The experience has been fantastic on every level.

YPP Trainee
AWARDS PRESENTATION CEREMONY

The 2014 TPO Network Awards were presented at a gala ceremony in Dubai, United Arab Emirates hosted by Dubai Exports.
What Makes a Winner?

01 Gala dinner
02 Ms. Arancha González and H.E. Eng. Saed Al Awadi
03 Dubai Exports hosted gala dinner entertainment
04 The winners. From left to right: Representative for ZDA, Mr. Hiroshi Wago, Mr. Francisco J. Garzón, Ms. Simona Gailiusnaitė, Mr. Devendranath Chamroo
05 H.E. Eng. Saed Al Awadi
06 Dubai Exports hosted gala dinner entertainment
07 TPO Network Awards 2014 trophy
08 Dubai Exports hosted gala dinner entertainment
09 Dubai Exports hosted gala dinner entertainment
## ADJUDICATING PANEL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chair</td>
<td>International Trade Centre</td>
<td>Ms. Arancha González</td>
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<td>Executive Director</td>
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<td>Members</td>
<td>Advantage Austria</td>
<td>Mr. Karl Hartleb</td>
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<td>Deputy Director General</td>
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<td>Jamaica Promotions Corporation</td>
<td>Ms. Delaine Morgan</td>
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<td>Head Of Business Information Services</td>
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<td>Malaysia External Trade Development</td>
<td>Dr. Wong Lai Sum</td>
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<td>Corporation</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<td>Pro México</td>
<td>Ms. Elena Achar Samra</td>
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<td>Chief, Export Promotion</td>
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<td>International Trade Centre</td>
<td>Mr. Rajesh Aggarwal</td>
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<td>Chief, Trade Facilitation and Policy for Business</td>
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<td>Coordinators</td>
<td>International Trade Centre</td>
<td>Mr Imamo Ben Mohamed Imamo</td>
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<td>&amp; Ms Ann Penistan</td>
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The Adjudicating Panel for the 2014 TPO Network Awards was chaired by the Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, and included senior representatives of the 2012 winners, as well as the former and current TPO Network Conference hosts.

The winners of the 2014 TPO Network Awards were presented during the 10th TPO Network World Conference in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

More information on the awards can be found at: http://www.tponetwork.net or requested via e-mail from: wtpo-awards@intracen.org.

Morocco is to host the 2016 edition of the Trade Promotion Organization (TPO) Network World Conference and Awards in 2016. The Centre marocain de promotion des exportations (Maroc Export) was selected following a vote by members of the global TPO Network.

W: www.marocexport.ma
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This publication draws from the submissions of the 2014 TPO Network Award winners. It has been prepared with the help of a number of people, both from the winning TPOs and from ITC.

Dianna Rienstra, International Consultant; Ann Penistan of the TSI Strengthening Section, ITC; and Kristina Golubic, graphic designer of ITC’s Communications and Events Section (CE) helped to research, write, edit, design and produce this edition of What Makes a Winner?

For more information on the TPO Network World Conference and Awards visit: www.tponet.net
FSC is an independent, non-governmental, not for profit organization established to promote the responsible management of the world’s forests.

Printed by ITC Digital Printing Service on FSC paper, which is environmentally-friendly paper (without chlorine) using vegetable-based inks. The printed matter is recyclable.

A free pdf is available on ITC’s website at:
www.intracen.org/publications.
The International Trade Centre (ITC) is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations.

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