WHAT MAKES A WINNER?
The 5th TPO Network Awards were presented at the 9th TPO Network World Conference, which took place in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in October 2012. More than 200 participants from 65 countries gathered to address the theme, Transforming TPOs’ Business Through Innovation.

The Awards recognize outstanding TPO management and business processes of export development initiatives. Participants share good practices, which encourages innovative approaches and initiatives by TPOs. The four categories for the Award, determined by the 2012 Adjudicating Panel, were:

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

In 2012, Adjudicating Panel members decided to recognize 2nd and 3rd place applications per country category. These applications, including the Special Mention award, warranted recognition because of the innovativeness of their initiatives or processes.

THE 2012 WINNERS

**Jamaica**: Best Trade Promotion Organization from a Small Island Developing State (Jamaica Promotions Corporation – JAMPRO)

**Uganda**: Best Trade Promotion Organization from a Least Developed Country (Uganda Export Promotion Board – UEPB)

**Mexico**: Best Trade Promotion Organization from a Developing Country (ProMéxico)

**Austria**: Best Trade Promotion Organization from a Developed Country (Advantage Austria)

Special Mention

Switzerland – from a developed country (Switzerland Global Enterprise – S-GE)

Second Place

**Dominican Republic** – from a Small Island Developing State (Dominican Republic Export and Investment Centre – CEI-RD)

**Zambia** – from a Least Developed Country (Zambia Development Agency – ZDA)

**Jordan** – from a Developing Country (Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation – JEDCO)

**Lithuania** – from a Developed Country (Enterprise Lithuania)

Third Place

**Benin** – from a Least Developed Country (Benin Agency for Trade Promotion – ABePEC)

**United Arab Emirates** – from a Developing Country (Dubai Exports)

**France** – from a Developed Country (UBIFRANCE)
DEFINING, SUPPORTING & 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 defining, supporting and sharing the highest standards from which all TPOs can benefit.

The 2012 TPO Network Awards’ applicants showcased their highest achieving export development initiatives. They demonstrated innovation and efficiency in their approach to selecting and designing their services, as well as measuring and tracking results. The winners also considered the value of their export development initiatives to support their clients’ sustainable success in the global market.

Four countries were recognized for their outstanding national efforts. 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. Some of these pioneering approaches can be replicated by other TPOs include:

- Establishing and implementing SME competitiveness measurement and development systems; and
- Innovative approaches to developing partnerships with government and the private sector to design and deliver more relevant, targeted and efficient services to clients.

This is a very brief description of the many noteworthy approaches that winners and applicants have demonstrated over the past few years. 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 impact of export development initiatives is much more difficult due to the intangible changes that often occur as a result of their service delivery. Thoughtful approaches to tackling this issue were demonstrated by many applicants. The application process itself has stimulated TPOs to review how they to track and monitor results. Many applicants are taking a more structured approach to recording and analysing these results to improve their services offerings.

THE AWARDS AS A CHANGE AGENT

As the TPO Network secretariat for managing the awards, ITC aims to facilitate knowledge-sharing so that all members of the TPO Network can benefit. To further this work, in 2013 ITC, along with the support of the 2012 and 2014 Adjudicating Panels, will be launching an awards briefing workshop initiative to be delivered in the lead up to the awards.

The training, to be rolled out in the second half of 2013, aims to explain the rationale behind the awards, the evaluation criteria and how participation in the awards process may inform and enhance the daily work of TPOs. Good practices will be shared during the workshop and also made available to the TPO Network on an ongoing basis through the ITC TPO Network learning platform, which will be launched in the third quarter of 2013.
I would like to congratulate all applicants for the 2012 TPO Network Awards. This fifth round of the awards recognized excellence in export development initiatives. The Adjudicating Panel faced difficult choices among so many compelling and creative initiatives.

The TPO Network Awards recognize innovative and forward-thinking TPOs that understand where the export opportunities lie and how to hone their market access strategies. However, TPOs and their clients need the right market information and the right networks. To be successful they need to navigate through the overarching regulatory environment in a business-friendly manner.

The importance of information, networks, trade finance and trade facilitation is emphasized in the strategies implemented by the 2012 TPO Network Awards candidates. The need for information and market intelligence comes first. Unless companies understand market trends and needs, trade flows and the status of the competition, they will not be able to identify and exploit market opportunities.

Exporters in developing countries often lack the market information and contacts that their competitors in OECD countries enjoy. This information asymmetry must be addressed, particularly for South-South trade. The role of TPOs has never been more critical for the sustainability of exporting SMEs — breaking into new markets and finding ways to survive in traditional markets require innovative thinking and creative strategies.

TPOs act as a catalyst to create jobs and increase the export income of their countries through offering targeted services that enable enterprises to extend their reach globally and boost exports. Through sharing practices that work, TPOs also help their colleagues to better deliver an export development service, which contributes to enhancing trade-related technical assistance worldwide.

What makes a winner? showcases the fifth 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 2012 winners! I wish you all the very best over the next two years in the lead up to the 2014 TPO Network World Conference and Awards, to be hosted by Dubai Exports in the United Arab Emirates.

Patricia Francis  
Executive Director  
International Trade Centre

TROPHY DESIGN

The design of the trophy is based on the ITC logo and symbolizes ITC’s signature as the administrator for the TPO Network of the only global awards to recognize trade promotion organizations. The trophy is engraved with the winner’s name. Every two years, the trophies are produced in the country hosting the TPO Network World Conference and Awards ceremony as part of the host’s contribution to the event.

The 2012 trophy was designed by Jeremy Brown from ITC and produced by INSPIRE CRYSTAL SDN BHD, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
What Makes a Winner?

Export Max is enabling participating companies to be competitively positioned to take advantage of market opportunities. Companies are responsible for implementing their enterprise development plans with support from JAMPRO, which are monitored for results. A number of the companies have demonstrated increased production and export earnings, which will ultimately contribute to Jamaica’s economic growth & development.

Delaine Morgan, Vice-President, Trade and Business Development, JAMPRO

The Jamaica Promotions Corporation (JAMPRO) launched its two-year Export Max: Enterprise Development for Export Growth programme in June 2011 to strengthen the competitiveness of a cluster of existing exporters and export-ready firms. Export Max was recognized for its targeted and strategic effort to become more responsive to the needs of the country’s exporting community through a strategy focusing on selected companies in priority sectors defined by the national export strategy (NES).

A key challenge confronting Jamaican companies is access to affordable financing to fulfil 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.

JAMPRO’s Export Max Programme was developed following a review of its business model of trying to assist as many exporters as possible. The review indicated that a programme of targeted and sustained assistance to companies could enhance the results JAMPRO was already getting under its broad engagement strategy.

One of the goals of Export Max is to proactively identify needs and design and deliver customized enterprise development plans. Export Max delivers a coordinated and focused problem-solving approach to issues facing selected companies.

IDENTIFYING THE OBSTACLES

In developing the NES, a broad consultation with exporters, trade associations and trade facilitation stakeholders identified the obstacles facing companies, including:

- Limited in-depth training in developing business plans, marketing, financial management and pricing;
- A fragmented approach to targeting current and potential exporters for support in the areas of business and export competency services, such as consulting, counselling, mentoring and training;
- Lack of an export training curriculum with short courses on issues such as market development and access; and
- Lack of understanding about the new business models for the future.
CUSTOMIZED CAPACITY BUILDING AND MARKETING SUPPORT

To overcome these obstacles, the Export Max programme provides customized capacity building and marketing support to a cluster of 15 firms selected as having the best growth potential and operating in sectors prioritized under the NES: agro-processing, aquaculture, coffee, fashion, minerals and mining, ICT, entertainment and education.

Selection criteria included companies that showed potential to grow and compete, but lacked resources. They were also selected on the basis of experience, capacity to meet additional demand, net worth of the business and potential economic impact.

The call for expression of interest went out for six weeks and brought in 55 applications. A detailed and rigorous selection process followed, which included diagnostics and an assessment by an adjudicating panel comprised of representatives from the private and public sectors.

FLEXIBLE ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Memorandums of Understanding were signed. Needs assessment results were used to develop customized, flexible enterprise development plans and specific targets for each company. Each was assigned an experienced JAMPRO client manager to ensure individualized service that includes ongoing business coaching. Services are delivered by JAMPRO and its funding partners.

Export Max companies are responsible for implementing their export development plans with select initiatives from JAMPRO funded on a cost-sharing basis. However, companies have realized substantial cost savings on critical business support services through partnerships forged by JAMPRO, which mobilized funding of more than US$ 160,000 for technical assistance to seven companies to help improve packaging and labelling, quality systems and other business processes.

KEY AREAS OF SUPPORT

- Business and financial management;
- Product development;
- Market research, intelligence, market access and penetration;
- Quality management;
- Customized capacity building initiatives;
- Strategic and operation planning, including business plan development;
- Developing human resources focused on skills enhancement, management training, entrepreneurship and understanding key markets; and
- Facilitating access to services of partner agencies.
AMBITIOUS GOALS AND GOOD RESULTS

Export Max is expected to generate a minimum of 30% overall growth in export sales. Participating in targeted trade shows and business match-making events is expected to generate 25 qualified trade leads, with each company accessing a minimum of two new markets.

Just seven months into the programme, participating companies reported export sales of US$ 1.5 million and more than 70 strong trade leads are being pursued. Nine companies participated in targeted trade shows. Approximately 150 local business-to-business linkages meetings between Export Max firms and local buyers have been facilitated. About 60% have participated in capacity workshops and seminars offered by JAMPRO or through partner agencies.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Baseline data collected during the needs assessment process aids monitoring and performance evaluation through JAMPRO’s Value Added Monitoring and Evaluation system. The system measures the extent to which the objectives of the programme are being met and is based on encouragement and coaching.

Client managers are required to maintain and report on regular interactions with participants, which involves a minimum of one site visit per quarter and contact with the companies at least three times a month. Data collection instruments collect quantitative and performance data quarterly. Feedback is provided through the client managers and biannual committee meetings involving three JAMPRO representatives and two senior officers of each company.

"The keys to success include listening to clients, conducting a diagnosis of their business needs and designing well defined enterprise development plans with workable strategies which the participating companies are committed to execute.

Delaine Morgan, Vice-President, Trade and Business Development, JAMPRO"
What Makes a Winner?

BEST TPO FROM A LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY

UGANDA EXPORT PROMOTION BOARD (UEPB)

MARKET-LED PRODUCTION AND PRODUCT MAPPING – KEYS TO SUCCESS

UEPB together with other stakeholders formulated the NationalExport Strategy, which is the cornerstone for export promotion and development… and synchronizes with the National Development Plan and national trade policy. Previously, production and marketing were not synchronized. Today, there is a lot of effort in ensuring that ample market research is undertaken to support market-led production.

Florence Kata, Chief Executive Officer, Uganda Export Promotion Board

Strengthening Uganda’s agricultural sector is a priority in the country’s National Export Strategy (NES). According to the NES, Uganda’s fruit and vegetable sector is important – the downstream end of its supply chain supports about 1 million small, rural farmers. However, like many least developed and developing countries, Uganda’s cooperatives lack the capabilities to export what they are able to produce. Typically, in LDCs, production and marketing are not synchronized.

UEPB understood the sector’s potential to employ disadvantaged men, women and young people along the entire value chain. Other national initiatives to boost economic production and productivity are heavily concentrated in the sector, particularly focusing on cooperatives and production clusters.

UEPB was recognized for its mutually beneficial partnership with the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), strengthening newly-created Market Linkage Centres (MLCs) and effecting behavioural change within cooperatives. It was also recognized for boosting exports in selected agricultural products.

IMPROVING PRODUCTION PRACTICES AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

UEPB worked together with NAADS to complement efforts to boost market-led production and productivity within the selected agricultural clusters. NAADS’ research identified competency and capability gaps in the horticultural sector and underscored the need for initiatives to support marketing capability development in the selected clusters.

MLCs were created in three cooperatives clustered to produce citrus fruit in the north, pineapples in central Uganda and hot peppers in the east. The selected cooperatives are geographically located within promising clusters, demonstrate some marketing capacity, have a good membership base and some physical infrastructure to aid production and marketing activities. Most importantly, the cooperatives were keen to link up with export markets.

Targeted and extensive market research identified the needs of buyers locally and in the region.

Improving production practices and quality management along the entire value chain are key components of the initiative, together with the strong market linkage programme. The initiative relied on UEPB’s trained staff who delivered training, consulting and counselling services.
Capacity building was delivered through specialized training workshops on quality control and horticultural export management, export processing procedures and market competencies of cooperatives. Buyer-inward and producer-outward trade missions from and into regional markets were organized.

**A WIDE-RANGE OF SERVICES**

MLCs offer the following services:

- Export market information – presenting market trends and advice on planning and production processes;
- Business counselling and advisory services – fostering long-term enterprise development through customized, tailor-made support services for producer communities. Adding value is the driving factor;
- Capacity building – export business or business in general requires skills and capabilities in various managerial and functional aspects entailing quality management, production planning and forecasting, records management and business management;
- Business market linkage and matchmaking – this is a critical contact point for buyers wishing to get into direct touch with producers and vice versa; and
- General information and publications – MLCs act as an extension of UEPB in rural settings – business community reference centres offer various information products from brochures, leaflets relevant to producers, exporters and the business community at large.

The initiative also supports farmers and cooperatives to improve production through quality seeds for breeding, multiplication and distribution supplied by NAADS; strengthening farmers’ production and marketing associations; and improving quality and product differentiation of fresh produce on offer.

**LINKING COOPERATIVES AND FARMERS TO EXPORT MARKETS**

Market linkages were developed through the MLCs, which UEPB worked with to tailor their service offering to meet the needs of the cooperatives.

Through MLCs, cooperatives coordinate their marketing functions, specifically managing export transactions to increase sales and revenues. The first step is to enter regional markets with a target of US$ 500,000 in export earnings. To date, UEPB reports a success rate of about 25% and growing. Exports are primarily to South Sudan and Eastern Kenya.

UEPB is tracking this progress using an M&E (monitoring and evaluation) tool. Developed together with the MLCs, the tool evaluates levels of success in quantity and value of export sales, level of community participation and number of exports negotiations. Forms are electronically filled and emailed to the MLC coordinating officer at UEPB. Changes in the degree of marketing competencies of the MLC’s is also monitored.
Today, ample market research is undertaken before production begins. Cooperatives understand what the market needs and produce as per market specifications and timelines.

**BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE**

The creation of MLCs laid the foundation for trust between the farmers and the buyers. Farmers are wary of middlemen, but can now speak to buyers with confidence to understand their requirements. A number of buyers directly contact farmers and make inquiries. Twenty-five local and regional buyers – fruit processors – have contacted farmers through MLC offices in Kasese, Serere and Luwero.

Following training, farmers are now able to build stronger partnerships and are more confident in their negotiating skills. With assurance of an existing market, they understand the need to invest more time and resources to meet demand for their products. Farmers and farmer groups have benefited from benchmarking best practices from advanced producers in the region.

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“Least developed countries should not fall into the habit of haphazard production and should take advantage of positive agglomeration effects in agricultural clusters.”

Florence Kata, Chief Executive Officer, Uganda Export Promotion Board

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**IMPORTANT LESSONS LEARNED**

Two important lessons UEPB learned are the importance of market led production and product mapping for specific products and services. Both are critical to export promotion and development.

The greatest challenge facing many TPOs in least developed countries is inadequate government investment in export marketing. Because agriculture is a priority under the country’s NES, working in partnership with the NAADS was a natural fit. This gave the MLC initiative an important boost.
What Makes a Winner?

**BEST TPO FROM A DEVELOPING COUNTRY**

**PROMÉXICO TRADE AND INVESTMENT**

**BOOSTING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF SMALL PRODUCERS**

“Proméxico focuses on clients’ needs. We have executives in charge of clients and we stay very close to them and know what they require to take advantage of market opportunities.”

**Javier Juseppe, Head of the Agribusiness Division, ProMéxico**

Mexico’s agricultural sector is comprised of many small producers scattered across the country who cannot export by themselves. While larger corporations export billions of dollars of agricultural products to the United States, thousands of small producers are shut out of this dynamic and growing market. Fragmentation, out-of-date or inefficient production processes, lack of certification, dependency on expensive intermediaries and price volatility impeded the export growth of agrifood products.

**MOVING BEYOND TRADITIONAL EXPORT PROMOTION SERVICES**

ProMéxico was recognized for its Export Supply Integration Model (INTEX), which it developed to move beyond traditional export promotion services to develop innovative models better suited to the needs of SMEs. INTEX was used to boost the export capacity and competitiveness of small producers of greenhouse tomatoes by using partnership schemes.

ProMéxico, created five years ago, is developing several new models to support its clients. Previously, the TPO functioned as an export investment promotion agency. Today, it is proving to be more in tune with what companies need.

**IDENTIFYING THE NICHE MARKETS**

ProMéxico identified an expanding US market for greenhouse house tomatoes – about US$ 250 million annually. Then, it developed a plan to bring together 500 producers from 13 different states under a unified brand, Tekitoma. Over three years, ProMéxico found a group of producers that knew they had a good product and were keen to export. With ProMéxico’s support, they believed they could diversify into varieties of tomatoes that are more highly valued on the market.

A market study was conducted in the United States, Canada and Asia through ProMéxico’s local offices. Representatives talked to 25 distributors, buyers and experts to assess potential opportunities. A study was also conducted in Mexico to analyse the profitability of greenhouse tomato production, create a tomato export guide, propose a simplified logistics operation model to reach international markets, and determine how to provide a consistent consolidated volume year round.

Meetings were held in the 13 regions together with experts on greenhouse production, health and safety, certification, foreign trade, financing and export promotion. Social-technical studies were carried out by specialized research institutions, the National Research Institute for Forestry, Agriculture and Livestock and the Central Bank Trust for Agriculture.
The conclusion was that customizing the INTEX model to address challenges faced by greenhouse tomato producers was the solution and would realize benefits that are tangible in the short term and sustainable over the long term.

FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

One of the biggest challenges was convincing reluctant small producers to work together in partnership. When ProMéxico presented them with a plan and incentives to join the project, they became enthusiastic. The partnerships are working and are being reinforced by additional funding under different programmes from various government agencies.

Project participants formed a company (Integradora Horticola Tekitoma, S.A. de C.V.) with a board of directors. Producers are now exporting under one brand through one channel, which has resulted in better prices and productivity as well as improved logistics. INTEX also:

- Brought together federal, state and local players to create an ongoing support structure;
- Implemented technical training programmes;
- Developed software tailored to the project’s needs; and
- Negotiated improved payment systems with an average 40% advanced payment and the balance in 21 days.

The result was US$ 40 million of exports in 2011. Productivity improved by 50%, production costs were reduced by 8% and shipments increased by 60%. ProMéxico estimates 5,000 new jobs can be created in rural areas in this sector alone.

STRENGTHENING EXPORT CAPACITIES

The INTEX model links a series of activities that boost SMEs’ competitiveness and strengthen export capacities. It follows three steps:

1. Awareness raising
   - Identifying foreign trade opportunities;
   - Publishing opportunities and capturing producers’ attention; and
   - Selecting producers with potential.

2. Export-readiness check up
   - Diagnosing export capacities by evaluating product quality and level of compliance and safety requirements;
   - Identifying technical training and technology transfer needs; and
   - Standardizing production by training producers and technicians.

3. Developing and executing export plans
   - Creating an integrating company;
   - Increasing small producers’ negotiating power;
   - Negotiating directly with supermarket chains and/or large buyers to optimize distribution channels; and
   - Implementing delivery programmes with logistics optimization models.
What Makes a Winner?

A Versatile Model for Any Agribusiness

Proméxico’s INTEX is a versatile model, which means it can be applied to several products in the agribusiness sector. Today, it is being implemented for five other agricultural products – mangoes, Persian limes, papayas, pecan nuts and berries – with each mapped into a logical framework outlining objectives and tactics together with indicators for continuous performance management and timely corrective action.

“...The INTEX model can work for any agribusiness product where the growers are scattered but seasonally complemented. Its main driver is to take advantage of market opportunities...”

Javier Juseppe, Head of the Agribusiness Division, Proméxico
What Makes a Winner?

The success of this initiative is the strong partnerships that Advantage Austria can offer in our efforts to boost export development for our IT sector. Go Silicon Valley provides a real learning experience in building strategies and skills. In this way, companies can attract venture capital and develop business models that work.

Karl Hartleb, Deputy Director General, Advantage Austria

Advantage Austria’s offices in Los Angeles and New York drive its technology network and are responsible for strategic partnerships with US research institutions such as the prestigious Stanford Research Institute and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Building on this network, in 2009 Advantage Austria launched Go Silicon Valley in partnership with the business accelerator Plug and Play Tech Center, PnP based in Sunnyvale.

California’s Silicon Valley is the epicentre of technology innovation with an inflow of global talent, a culture of mentoring by successful entrepreneurs and the largest concentration of venture capital funded IT companies in the world. (One-third of all US venture capital – $US 7.6 billion – is invested in Silicon Valley.)

Selected companies complete a three-month programme with Plug and Play Tech Center to kick-start their businesses. The business accelerator houses about 250 start-up companies with two to 150 employees. Here, participating companies are exposed to an extensive, invaluable network.

Go Silicon Valley is successfully enabling SMEs to break into the fiercely competitive US market and access risk capital. It is opening up unforeseen opportunities for commercializing innovative business ideas on the world market.
A RIGOROUS PROGRAMME

The target group is IT start-ups with novel, scalable, products and technologies. Participants are recruited through incubators, universities, research and funding agencies, and companies. Applicants are selected based on the quality of the pitch they make before a jury. Advantage Austria begins its assistance by offering the 60 to 80 applicants a one-day training session to help them improve the quality of the pitches.

The jury is comprised of two US-based venture capitalists, a representative from Plug and Play and one from Advantage Austria’s Los Angeles office. Up to 20 companies are selected, based on the:

- Novelty of the business idea from the US market perspective;
- Scalability of the business idea; and
- Suitability of the networking environment provided by the business accelerator in Silicon Valley.

Before leaving, successful candidates participate in a one-day training session with Advantage Austria to prepare them for their three-month stay in the Silicon Valley environment. Companies pay a €100 application fee and €400 when they travel to the United States. Advantage Austria covers the remainder of the fees. Those that decide to stay in the United States can apply for additional funding and support. For companies that return to Austria, incubator space is provided and subsidized for six months.

The rigorous, fast-paced programme at Plug and Play includes a four-day entrepreneurship seminar, weekly internal meetings with company executives and venture capital firms, and learning how to pitch to the investment community. Mentoring by Advantage Austria’s Los Angeles technology officer and the networking opportunity are critical success factors for start-up SMEs being exposed to a thriving business culture. Advantage Austria in Los Angeles is also responsible for implementing and monitoring Go Silicon Valley.

LEARNING WHAT IT TAKES TO SUCCEED

Each participant defines their objectives for their Silicon Valley experience, which typically include:

- Obtaining market intelligence
- Finding business partners
- Finding B2B customers
- Business development
- Finding investors

After spending time in Silicon Valley, participants better understand what it takes to create a sustainable company in the constantly evolving high-tech industry. They learn how to access venture capital and are exposed to new technologies. Importantly, they bring their new networks back to Austria, which contributes to Advantage Austria’s aim of strengthening the industry at home.
Towards the end of their stay, participants are interviewed. Advantage Austria reports that many significantly changed their business plans and most found strategic or sales channel partners. Several companies, which had previously failed to sell to large US businesses, successfully initiated contact with the right people.

Most participants report changes in managerial behaviour, such as changing their approach to designing strategies and defining objectives based on relevant market intelligence they have gathered. In addition, companies are exposed to and absorb the risk-taking culture that shapes the Silicon Valley IT ecosystem.

**BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COMPANY IN THE HIGH-TECH INDUSTRY**

For some companies participating in Go Silicon Valley, the process acts as a powerful change agent. Some participating companies leave the IT sector. Some change their business models, venture into new businesses or find a new financial structure. Others quickly adapt their business plans and become scalable, successful businesses. Five companies have set up subsidiaries in the United States, where the business culture is thriving, and one has been acquired by an investor.
The 2012 TPO Network Awards were presented at a gala ceremony in Kuala Lumpur, hosted by MATRADE.
Patricia Francis, Executive Director, ITC, presents Wong Lai Sun, CEO of MATRADE with an award to recognize the organization’s efforts in providing sustainable export trade support to its SMEs. The award also recognizes MATRADE’s joint collaboration with ITC in hosting the 2012 TPO Network World Conference and Awards gala evening.

MATRADE hosted gala dinner entertainment

The winners.

From left to right: Daniel Kung, Chief Executive Director, S-GE; Hana Uraidi, Director Cross Cutting Support, JedCO; Karl Hartlieb, Deputy Director General, Advantage Austria; Lina Vaitkevicius, Deputy Managing Director, Enterprise Lithuania; Antoine de Dianous, International Cooperation Mission, UBFIRANCE; Delaine Morgan, Vice-President, Trade and Business Development, JAMPRO; Wong Lai Sun, Chief Executive Director, MATRADE; Patricia Francis, Executive Director, ITC; Dato’ Rebecca Fatima Sta Maria, Secretary General of Ministry of International Trade and Industry, Malaysia; Carlos Casas, Head of Export Development (2012), ProMéxico; Saed Al Awadi, Chief Executive Director, Dubai Exports; Hajah Noraihan Haji Mohamad Adrian, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Uganda, Malaysia; Robert Akinde, Director General, ABePEC; Andrew Chipwende, Director General, ZDA
Working with private experts will be important in the future for many TPOs. Customers are demanding more trade-specific know-how. Budget pressure from governments will enhance public-private initiatives. This initiative is a triple-win situation for Switzerland Global Enterprise, our customers and private experts. It is an interesting model for other countries.

Daniel Küng, CEO, Switzerland Global Enterprise (S-GE)

Switzerland’s Pool of Experts growth initiative is the only one of its kind in the world. By involving private consultants and trade experts, S-GE has built up a strong international business network for the Swiss economy and achieved significant benefits for companies tapping into new international markets. The Pool of Experts is comprised of 500 registered export specialists who value being included in the network. A database lists the available pool of experts, comprised of consultants and entrepreneurs from around the world. Cooperation with selected experts, certified by S-GE, ensures quality. To date, there are about 160 certified experts.

Using the Integrated Consulting Approach, consultants in Switzerland work with Swiss Business Hub representatives in foreign markets and local experts. These representatives have valuable general expertise, but rely on experts’ specialist knowledge of the sector in specific industries such as pharmaceuticals, medical technology, biotechnology and ICT. Under the Best Advice and Integrated Consulting approach companies receive the best possible support in export markets. Increasingly, Swiss SMEs demand high-quality, industry-specific expert assistance to achieve their objectives. S-GE offers them significant advantages, including:

• Greater industry know-how and knowledge of the consulting team;
• Local specialists who know the market;
• Private consultants/entrepreneurs who assist the SMEs;
• Quality assurance by S-GE; and
• Scalable and sustainable public-private partnerships.

Because of this public-private partnership arrangement, S-GE has sustainably and efficiently optimized their business model for consulting services for SMEs. As a direct result of developing this network S-GE has increased its consulting projects annually by 20% over the past two years.

REVIEWING PROCESSES AND PRACTICES

Applying for the TPO award helped S-GE review its processes and practices with their private experts in a very structured way. ‘The questions were very detailed and customer focused, so we really had to prove that our concept is successful for trade promotion,’ says Daniel Küng. ‘It involved many internal meetings about strategic positioning that will help us to improve our private-public partnership model and our products and services.’

NEW BRAND AND VALUE PROPOSITION 2013

Switzerland Global Enterprise changed its brand from former OSEC to the new appearance to highlight the organization’s export, import and investment promotion service offers under one roof. The experts’ development initiative is a key pillar of the export promotion services.
From the start, SMEs were our main target because they have many shortcomings, including poor technical training. They also have limited access to credit, production process standardization and quality control, as well as low quality presentation of products… these shortcomings can be overcome.

Horacio Alvarez, Export Advisor, CEI-RD

The Dominican Republic Export and Investment Centre (CEI-RD) created the Foreign Trade and Innovation Institute (I-CEI) to promote increased productivity and sustainable development in the Dominican economy. The I-CEI offers training courses and technical assistance to entrepreneurs, exporters and the Dominican business community in general. I-CEI seeks to strengthen institutional and operational capacity; provide training, technical assistance and an information centre; facilitate international trade relations and competitiveness for SMEs; and encourage foreign investment.

A REPLICABLE MODEL

CEI-RD’s Quality Department oversees and evaluates all activities, including training design, teaching methods, quality of content, documentation, teachers skills and methodologies, and organization. The results are analysed and recommendations made if necessary. Since its inception, the basic trade programmes have attracted 4,522 participants. According to Mr Alvarez, CEI-RD’s (I-CEI) initiative is replicable by other countries. ‘In this way, you can offer the appropriate technical training at the highest level, and efficiently give support to all companies in the private sector,’ he says.

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The Dominican Republic Export and Investment CENTRE

PROMOTING PRODUCTIVITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

From the start, SMEs were our main target because they have many shortcomings, including poor technical training. They also have limited access to credit, production process standardization and quality control, as well as low quality presentation of products… these shortcomings can be overcome.

Horacio Alvarez, Export Advisor, CEI-RD

The Dominican Republic Export and Investment Centre (CEI-RD) created the Foreign Trade and Innovation Institute (I-CEI) to promote increased productivity and sustainable development in the Dominican economy. The I-CEI offers training courses and technical assistance to entrepreneurs, exporters and the Dominican business community in general. I-CEI seeks to strengthen institutional and operational capacity; provide training, technical assistance and an information centre; facilitate international trade relations and competitiveness for SMEs; and encourage foreign investment.

TRAINING AND SUPPORT

The CEI-RD and I-CEI, both ISO 9001 certified, offer training and support in the following areas:

• High level training and basic trade programmes;
• Business English;
• Technical assistance and information on foreign trade;
• A quality standard certification programme;
• Training of CEI-RD and I-CEI staff; and
• ITC’s Modular Learning System on Supply Chain Management.

Technical assistance provided by CEI-RD and I-CEI seeks to act as a business accelerator for SMEs. Specialized staff helps companies improve production and access to international markets through quality control and association in clusters.

CEI-RD aims to improve the quality standards of Dominican exporting companies and provides training for exporter certification in the agricultural and industrial sectors.

Basic training in trade skills for exporters has been strengthened by surveys and diagnostic studies to evaluate the courses and seminars. Partnerships with other academic institutions enable CEI-RD and I-CEI to benchmark their work.

Monitoring and tracking results for the training, technical assistance and services include surveys, studies and diagnostics from the export sector to measure competitiveness gains.

What Makes a Winner?
SECOND PLACE WINNER
FROM A LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY

ZAMBIA DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (ZDA)

EXPANDING NON-TRADITIONAL EXPORTS THROUGH LOW-INTEREST LOANS

We greatly recommend and encourage other TPOs in least developed countries to replicate this model due to its impact on SME exporters that are faced with numerous financial constraints. TPOs should convince their governments to allocate resources to create such a sustainable initiative.

Glyne Michelo, Director, Export Promotion and Market Development, Zambia Development Agency

To address the challenges of export financing, the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) created the Zambia Export Development Fund (ZEDEF) to target producers’ associations in sectors including leather, coffee, timber, organic products, gemstones and crocodiles. The fund has propelled exporters in these sectors into export markets creating employment and generating revenues.

ZEDEF’s objective is to help expand non-traditional exports by providing low-interest loans at LIBOR plus 2%. Producer associations can obtain loans on behalf of their members for development of activities in non-traditional export sectors.

A QUICK – DISBURSING CREDIT FACILITY

The ZEDEF loan programme is a quick-disbursing credit facility accessed by producer associations. Producer associations assume joint responsibility for the total debt whether or not individual members repay. The Fund offers short-term loans for pre- and post-shipment finance for up to six months, and medium-term loans for production and/or seasonal inputs for up to 12 months.

In the last two years, ZEDEF disbursed eight loans totalling US$1,161,938 and €285,000. Loan applications are evaluated by the ZEDEF Loan Approval Committee (LAC). ZEDEF’s objectives include:

- Enabling new players, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises, to enter export markets and remain sustainable;
- Covering the export financing gap not covered by commercial banks in Zambia;
- Stimulating value-added activities on exports to increase national earnings and income flows; and
- Fostering investment flows into export areas in which Zambia has a competitive advantage to encourage innovation and technology transfer.

LAC undertakes monitoring and evaluation (M&E) missions to determine use and access impact of the loan funds. M&E missions give the ZEDEF Board first-hand information on how low-interest loans affect job creation, export performance and income generation.

One loan recipient projects over 100% increase in export sales and a five-fold increase in employment. Another loan recipient projects an over 40% increase in export sales and a substantial increase in employment.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE

According to Glyne Michelo, Director, Export Promotion and Market Development, the application process, ‘gave ZDA the opportunity to identify, distinguish and share export development initiatives with great potential for export development and job creation … it also gave us an opportunity to share best practices to benefit all TPOs in LDCs.’

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What Makes a Winner?

THE JORDAN ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (JEDCO)

DEVELOPING EXPORT BUSINESS PLANS FOR SMEs IN THE SERVICES SECTOR

Applying for the award brought JEDCO’s departments together to communicate, collect and compile the information. This built an internal team spirit and strengthened relations with the private sector as beneficiaries evaluated the programme.

Hana Uraidi Director Cross Cutting Support

Jordan is one of the most services-dominated economies of the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region, with the sector contributing an estimated 67% of gross domestic product. Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation (JEDCO) launched the EU funded Jordan Services Modernization Programme (JSMP) to support the modernization of service sector enterprises through specialized grant schemes on a competitive basis. One of these grant schemes is the Support to Export Development scheme. The programme targeting the services sector is the first of its kind in the region. It provides technical and financial assistance to SMEs to develop and implement export-oriented business plans, reinforce their growth, enhance productivity and boost competitiveness, in addition to identifying and entering new markets, obtaining international certifications, and undertaking joint actions with other companies to enhance synergies and value-chain creations.

Grants were awarded to companies to assist them in maximizing benefits from international and bilateral trade liberalization agreements. Countries where Jordan has preferential market access were targeted, including EU member states, as well as MENA region and GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) countries.

‘ENTERPRISING JORDAN’

JEDCO’s mission is ‘Enterprising Jordan’. The programme targets SMEs and provides grants contributing to:

• Product development costs – compliance with the requirements and certifications of the export market, making product samples and advertising materials, developing product brands and registering intellectual property rights in the target country;
• Market research; visiting the target markets and organizing marketing events; and
• Capacity building.

OPTIMIZING RESULTS, ACHIEVING IMPACT

JEDCO implemented rigorous application procedures and detailed performance monitoring, including regular visits, direct one-to-one relationships with the clients, and standardized reporting a comprehensive framework. Extensive, systematic and detailed monitoring and evaluation tools, methodology and report mechanisms have been implemented to ensure the beneficiary companies are optimizing results and achieving impact.

With its success and growing credibility with stakeholders, JEDCO is now implementing JSMP phase II with EU support.
We are providing Lithuanian SMEs with a practical and measurable evaluation of their performance. This is especially important considering the performance of foreign companies pursuing comparable activities in more developed markets. This allows our companies to effectively identify key aspects for improvement.

Paulius Lukauskas, Managing Director, Enterprise Lithuania

Enterprise Lithuania created a competitiveness measuring and development system, the Competitiveness Center. Its aim is to implement a comprehensive, fully functioning assessment and monitoring system to assess the competitiveness level of Lithuanian companies. The Competitiveness Center’s other objectives include providing tools to identify, address and eliminate factors impeding companies’ competitiveness on the domestic and the international level.

TARGETING STRATEGIC ECONOMIC SECTORS

The Competitiveness Center initiative is based on two key components:

- A diagnostic competitiveness evaluation using the Benchmark Index system, which compares the performance of 300 Lithuanian companies in foreign markets using 63 performance indicators; and
- A competitiveness enhancement framework using a subsidy scheme and a consultant network providing competitiveness enhancement projects for 60 companies.

The initiative targets SMEs in strategic economic sectors including electronics, printing and publishing, plastics, food processing, IT, construction, transport and logistics. Competitiveness enhancement projects have been conducted in the areas of sales and marketing, process improvement, human resources and innovation, and financial management.

To assess the impact of competitiveness enhancement projects, financial data from the 60 project participants were collected. Project participants’ added-value growth was measured as a percentage of sales revenue, which significantly exceeded the average added-value growth in corresponding economic sectors.

A FOCUSED EVALUATION OF ACHIEVEMENTS

For Enterprise Lithuania, the TPO awards application process was an opportunity to perform an in-depth review of the results achieved. Importantly, it also enabled staff to evaluate what key factors contributed the initiative’s success. These key findings can be integrated into other projects and shared with other TPOs.

Summarizing substantial practical results achieved in companies into key insights about best practices was a challenging task. The key insight is that focusing on tangible, practical impact and aspiring to reduce the administrative burden of project management build trust between companies and a TPO. This further strengthens the ability of both partners to deliver results in the future.

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**What Makes a Winner?**

**BENIN AGENCY FOR TRADE PROMOTION (ABEPEC)**

**DEVELOPING AND STRENGTHENING THE PINEAPPLE SECTOR**

*Mr Robert Akinde, Director General, Benin Agency for Trade Promotion*

In May 2010, the Benin Agency for Trade Promotion (ABePEC) launched the Reinforcement Project of Pineapple Value Chain to Export (AGOn) in cooperation with the International Trade Centre to develop and strengthen the pineapple sector by emphasizing trade, South-South cooperation, access to financial services and use of adaptive technologies. The project focuses on countries in West Africa and the Maghreb.

Challenges faced by the pineapple sector include a strong dependence on European Union markets and a lack of information and capacities to reach new markets in Africa. Access to credit is an obstacle as is the lack of insurance and protection against commercial risks.

The AGON project had three components:

- Access to financing for SMEs in the pineapple sector;
- An information and technology component to benefit pineapple sector actors from international business opportunities through use of information and communication technologies; and
- A trade promotion and South-South cooperation component to develop relationships between Benin and commercial partners and find business outlets for Benin businesses in the pineapple sector.

**STRENGTHENING THE EXPORT VALUE CHAIN**

The project identified 200 SMEs in pineapple export value chain involving 11,302 persons of which 9,843 (87.10%) are women. Strengthening the pineapple export value chain is allowing ABePEC to achieve its mission of promoting trade exchanges between Benin and Togo, Morocco, Niger and Burkina Faso, and reducing poverty.

- Pineapple exporters in the selected countries are finding new commercial opportunities in the Maghreb and West Africa reducing their dependence on European Union markets and supplying new income sources.
- Beninese beneficiaries of the programme are seeing their access to financing improved for agricultural production and processing.

Beninese pineapple producers and exporters – particularly women – are improving their market knowledge, making better decisions and increasing their margins through price and market transparency, facilitated by new adapted technologies solutions.

**A REPLICABLE MODEL THAT WORKS**

According to ABePEC, AGOn is a replicable model that could very easily be adapted to other least developed countries interested in adding value to agriculture products and strengthening – or creating – their export value chains.

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**THIRD PLACE WINNER**

**FROM A LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRY**

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Dubai was traditionally a trading centre that focused on re-exports, not exports. Dubai Exports, the first TPO in the United Arab Emirates, is increasing the number of exporters as well as the value of exports. This is a huge task for a new agency.

Saed Mohamed Al Awadi, Chief Executive Officer, Dubai Exports

Four years ago, Dubai Exports launched the Success Through Exports programme to meet the challenges of the international financial crisis and the ‘export inertia’ of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The programme is comprised of three complementary initiatives: Get Ready to Export, Begin to Export and Advanced Exporter.

DEVELOPING AND ENHANCING THE CAPACITY THE SME SECTOR

Dubai Exports entered the Begin to Export initiative, which emphasizes developing and enhancing the capacity of the SME sector. Begin to Export is built upon a suite of seven features: financial support; foreign market information and technical guidance; skills and coaching; exhibitions, trade missions and roadshows; overseas on-the-ground support; and advocacy and lobbying for change.

Begin to Export has the following objectives:

• To build exporter confidence and knowledge;
• To create and promote linkages and mutual learning among exporters;
• To identify issues relevant for SMEs and to be an advocate for them domestically and internationally;

To assist export-ready SMEs to enter the international business arena in a structured and planned manner; and

To increase the market shares of SME exporters through targeted activities.

Surveys and focus groups show that as a result of an ‘early win’ – a first export success – SMEs are now more likely to look at a broad range of countries as export markets. SMEs are taking a more planned and structured approach to their businesses and are considering exports as a key driver to their businesses and long-term growth. Most importantly, SMEs have learned that foreign markets require them to reassess their processes, products and planning.

Another success indicator is increased demand for the programme’s services and a greater demand from SMEs to become members of Dubai Exports.

LESSONS LEARNED

It is important for small firms to incorporate the thinking of exporting into their business plans so that it becomes a structured and strategic activity. These issues are common to all TPOs.

The application process enabled Dubai Exports staff to meet and discuss progress in a structured manner. They evaluated objectives and results, as well as market usage and the organization’s communications strategy. As a result of this process, the initiative was further refined to meet the needs of Dubai Export’s expanding clientele.
What Makes a Winner?

UbiFranCe’s French International Postgraduate Programme - Volontaire International en Entreprise (VIE) - strengthens French companies’ export capacity by helping them find adequate export-oriented employees.

The initiative is a government-backed programme enabling French companies to send young people between ages 18 and 28 on paid work assignments abroad for 6 to 24 months. More than 1,700 French companies and 7,200 young people have participated in the VIE scheme. Two-thirds of participating companies are SMEs.

LOWERING ACCESS BARRIERS

The VIE initiative, started in 2000, aims to lower access barriers to exports and encourage an international culture among young graduates to help them find employment. VIE targets French SMEs and mid-cap companies with small or non-existent export departments. A second target group is young graduates seeking international work experience.

The need and relevance of the VIE initiative are regularly reassessed through customer surveys. In 2009, VIE began providing recruitment services linking companies and VIE candidates.

The VIE initiative supports UbiFranCe’s global strategy to foster job creation in France for young people. A 2011 survey revealed that 90% of VIEs found a job at the end of their assignments and that two out of three participating companies made employment offers to their VIEs.

To ensure the VIE initiative well serves SMEs and mid-cap companies, strong emphasis is placed on low cost and reduced administrative burden for the companies using the scheme. A VIE’s average cost per year is €30,000, considered by companies as very competitive in most markets.

The VIE programme is a key element of UbiFranCe’s value proposition for French companies at every step of their export strategies.

A REPLICABLE MODEL FOR ALL TPOS

‘The VIE scheme is definitely replicable by other TPOs,’ says Antoine de Dianous. ‘We are currently helping the Ivory Coast do this. In this spirit, we have also promoted VIE at the European Union level at the European Commission in Brussels.’

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## ADJUDICATING PANEL

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<td>Enterprise Mauritius (EM)</td>
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ADJUDICATING PANEL 2014

The Adjudicating Panel for the 2014 TPO Network Awards is chaired by the Executive Director of the International Trade Centre, and includes 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 will be 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.

CONFERENCE HOST 2014

Dubai Exports, United Arab Emirates won the bid to host the 10th TPO Network World Conference in the autumn of 2014 in Dubai in October 2012 in cooperation with the International Trade Centre.
The next conference in the United Arab Emirates will be the 10th in the series of biennial TPO conferences. The TPO Network World Conference is the international networking event of TPOs. It is hosted by TPOs for TPOs, in partnership with ITC. Conferences have been held since 1996:

- The 1st Conference in 1996 in Cartagena, Colombia, addressed the impact of the new multilateral trading system in the wake of the creation of the World Trade Organization.
- The 2nd Conference in 1998 in Santiago, Chile, followed with a closer look at trade promotion tools.
- At the 3rd Conference in 2000 in Marrakech, Morocco, 2,000 participants addressed the challenges of the digital economy and began to review the challenges of public-private partnership and impact assessment.
- The turbulent business environment was the theme of the 4th Conference in Beijing, China, in 2002.
- At the 5th Conference in 2004 in St. Julian’s, Malta, participants focused on innovation and practical action as a response to rapid evolutions in global trade.
- The opportunities and challenges for TPOs in global trade were discussed at the 6th Conference in Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 2007.
- The 7th Conference in 2008 in The Hague, the Netherlands, explored key issues for TPOs to remain competitive in the changing international marketplace.
- The 8th Conference in 2010 in Mexico City, Mexico, addressed the impact of TPOs and how to improve and report on their efforts.
- The 9th Conference in 2012 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, explored the innovative approaches TPOs are implementing to meet the challenges of today’s new business environment and to prepare for the future.

For more information on the TPO Network Conference: www.tponetwork.net

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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