Managing the Linkage: Defining an Effective Framework

The Issue: The process of national export strategy design is fairly straightforward. It involves (i) allocating available resources to particular organizations to launch or maintain specific initiatives that are intended to achieve priority objectives; and (ii) establishing a realistic resource mobilization programme to complement existing resources.

It can, however, be a difficult exercise, and the process as well as the approach to establishing priorities has to be carefully managed.

But the real management challenge comes in the implementation of strategy - a challenge that becomes very much more complex when the strategy has the dual objective of increasing exports and reducing poverty.

The Proposition: Effective strategy management requires an institutional framework and a monitoring process. And when it comes to an export strategy with a pro-poor orientation, a tailor-made approach is essential to both.

Specific indicators/impact measures need to be determined to gauge the success of the strategy in strengthening the export development – poverty reduction linkage.

In addition, the approach to strategy management should be defined during the strategy design stage. The institutional framework and monitoring mechanism must be in place before the strategy is launched.

Focus of the Debate: The debate will address the following questions:

1. Is the proposition valid? Is a tailor-made approach to strategy management required? If so, what should management of a pro-poor national export strategy actually entail?
2. What are the institutional considerations regarding the effective management of a pro-poor export strategy?
3. Is it possible to specify relevant impact measures – short-term, medium-term and long-term - for a pro-poor export strategy? If so, what are these measures? How can they be effectively monitored? If impact measurement is not a realistic option, what other approaches to strategy monitoring have proven effective?
4. What are the implications of a pro-poor export strategy on the operations of trade support institutions that have previously focused on commercial and competitiveness ‘indicators of success’?
5. Indeed, should trade support institutions and, in particular, trade promotion organizations, broaden their current focus and adopt new management processes that reflect a poverty reduction orientation? If so, how must management systems be adjusted?