



<http://www.intracen.org/publication/Investing-in-Trade-Promotion-Generates-Revenue/>

THE ROLE OF TISIs

The constantly changing global marketplace calls for businesses to innovate to remain competitive. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have limited capacity and resources to enter foreign markets. They need access to effective and efficient trade support services to achieve internationalization. This need is addressed by **trade and investment support institutions (TISIs)**.

TISIs such as trade and investment promotion organizations, chambers of commerce, women's associations and sector organizations help businesses to prepare their export offer and connect with partners in target markets. TISIs also promote public-private dialogue and advocate for the interests of the business community to the government.

Empirical studies demonstrate the strong multiplier effect and substantial impact that can be achieved by working with and through efficient and effective TISIs. TISIs are key partners in the

STRONGER AND BETTER PERFORMING TISIs

ITC's **Trade and Investment Support Institutions Strengthening Programme** is designed to improve the managerial and operational performance of TISIs. ITC supports them to deliver improved trade support services to their clients. Through the TISI Strengthening programme, ITC provides advice, training and information either through modular basis or under a full-fledged performance improvement programme following a comprehensive approach called **AIM for Results**: Assess, Improve and Measure:

- **Assess:** analyse the trade-support infrastructure in a country or region and identify TISI effectiveness and efficiency
- **Improve:** understand and address needs through capacity building and business advisory solutions
- **Measure:** determine how to measure performance and what to measure



STAGE 1: ASSESS

A comprehensive analysis of TISI management and operational effectiveness and efficiency

TISI benchmarking

ITC's benchmarking tool provides TISIs with an independent and objective assessment of their institutional situation, efficiency and performance. This tool helps to identify strengths and weaknesses in comparison with peer organizations under four main areas of performance: Leadership and direction, Resources and processes, Service portfolio delivery and Result measurement. TISIs can also review an online self-assessment test to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

For more information, please visit www.tisibenchmarking.org.

TISI institutional mapping

ITC assesses the trade and investment environment in which a TISI operates before making recommendations for institutional development in a country or region. It maps existing TISIs and compares their services with the needs of SMEs, assessing the relevance of existing services and identifying gaps or duplications.

Feasibility study to set up a TISI

ITC supports its partner countries in establishing TISIs by conducting feasibility studies and helping the TISI leadership to identify needs and make strategic decisions about institutional anchorage, positioning, size, service portfolio and alliances.

"Well done ITC for empowering us with the requisite skills. Your assistance is enabling us to realize our potential and indeed we will do our part as far as promoting export led economic growth"

Mrs. Pilime,
Chief Executive Officer
Zimtrade (Zimbabwe)

STAGE 2: IMPROVE

Modular capacity building and business-advisory solutions to improve TISI performance

ITC prepares comprehensive Performance Improvement Roadmaps, which are validated by beneficiary TISIs. ITC's improvement solutions usually involve long-term engagement with TISIs that have high potential for development impact. ITC solutions focus on:

Enhancing strategic direction and operational management

ITC assists TISIs in developing or refining their mission, devising strategies that meet SMEs' needs and charting operational plans to achieve strategic objectives. ITC proposes the following solutions to strengthen TISI performance:

- Strategy design
- Change management
- Good governance & risk management
- Knowledge management
- HR & operational development
- Customer relationship management

Designing, developing and delivering efficient and effective trade support services

ITC assists TISIs to better position, promote and deliver services to SME clients by using innovative online and offline channels. In addition, ITC provides training and advice to help TISIs develop their service portfolio with the following services:

- Trade information
- Market analysis
- Business environment
- Export value-chain optimization
- Export promotion
- Gender mainstreaming

Facilitating business generation

ITC offers business generation solutions to increase business transactions in targeted sectors. TISIs receive technical assistance so they can identify trade opportunities and translate them into business transactions through events such as regional buyer-seller meetings, trade missions and trade fairs.



STAGE 3: MEASURE

A focus on understanding impact and using results for continuous improvement

In today's business environment, TISIs face higher performance expectations from stakeholders. They must provide more value for less money. ITC is developing tools and methodologies to help TISIs put in place effective result measurement mechanisms that will help them understand, manage and continuously improve performance.

ITC helps TISIs to:

- Formulate an impact assessment framework and dashboard
- Select relevant and efficient data collection methods
- Customize the impact assessment system to their service portfolios
- Translate the results into reports for governments and stakeholders.

Once a TISI has completed the improvement stage, ITC usually carries out a re-benchmark of the institution to evaluate the improvement made. This supports the TISI to measure its own improvement and also provides ITC a record of the effectiveness of the TISI Strengthening programme.



TISI NETWORKING

Building partnerships for greater impact

TISI partnerships that are built on shared business objectives and responsibilities can result in strategic benefits for all involved.

ITC provides advisory and training services to address issues that affect networks' impact and sustainability. ITC emphasizes the sharing of good practices among national, regional and international networks. In particular, ITC facilitates exchanges through different platforms: the Benchmarking on-line platform (www.tisibenchmarking.org), the biennial TPO Network World Conference and the TPO Network Awards.

The TPO Network members participate in dynamic exchange of information, good practices and collaborate on solution-oriented services for SME internationalization (www.tponetwork.net).

ITC'S UNIQUE EXPERTISE

ITC has a demonstrated track record of success in the area of institutional development. In the last three years, over 50 TISIs have benefitted from the assistance and technical advice offered from the TISI Strengthening Programme, through an improvement partnership that delivers impact to local businesses. ITC brings:

- **Exclusive focus** on TISI performance improvement and on providing integrated solutions supporting SMEs access to international markets
- **Global perspective** and **unique network**. Through the WTPO Conference and Awards, the ITC Advisory Board of selected CEOs of TISIs, and regular relations with TISI regional networks, ITC has developed a network of connections and collaboration with TISIs around the world
- A **neutral image** that allows partners to collaborate and share information
- A **highly specialised team of experts** with extensive and practical experience of working with TISIs
- Specific **customised methodologies** that have been extensively tested, proven, standardised and comparable across different categories of TISIs (official trade promotion organisations, private sector chambers of commerce or sector and other business associations, etc.) as well as across different levels of institutional maturity
- Proven capability to **adapt and apply** its methodologies and assistance **at different levels of economic development**, from least developed to developed countries
- Large **range of integrated services and modules** to improve performance across a number of domains.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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Strengthening Trade and Investment Support Institutions

Scale and sustainability: TISIs multiply the effect of trade related initiatives

