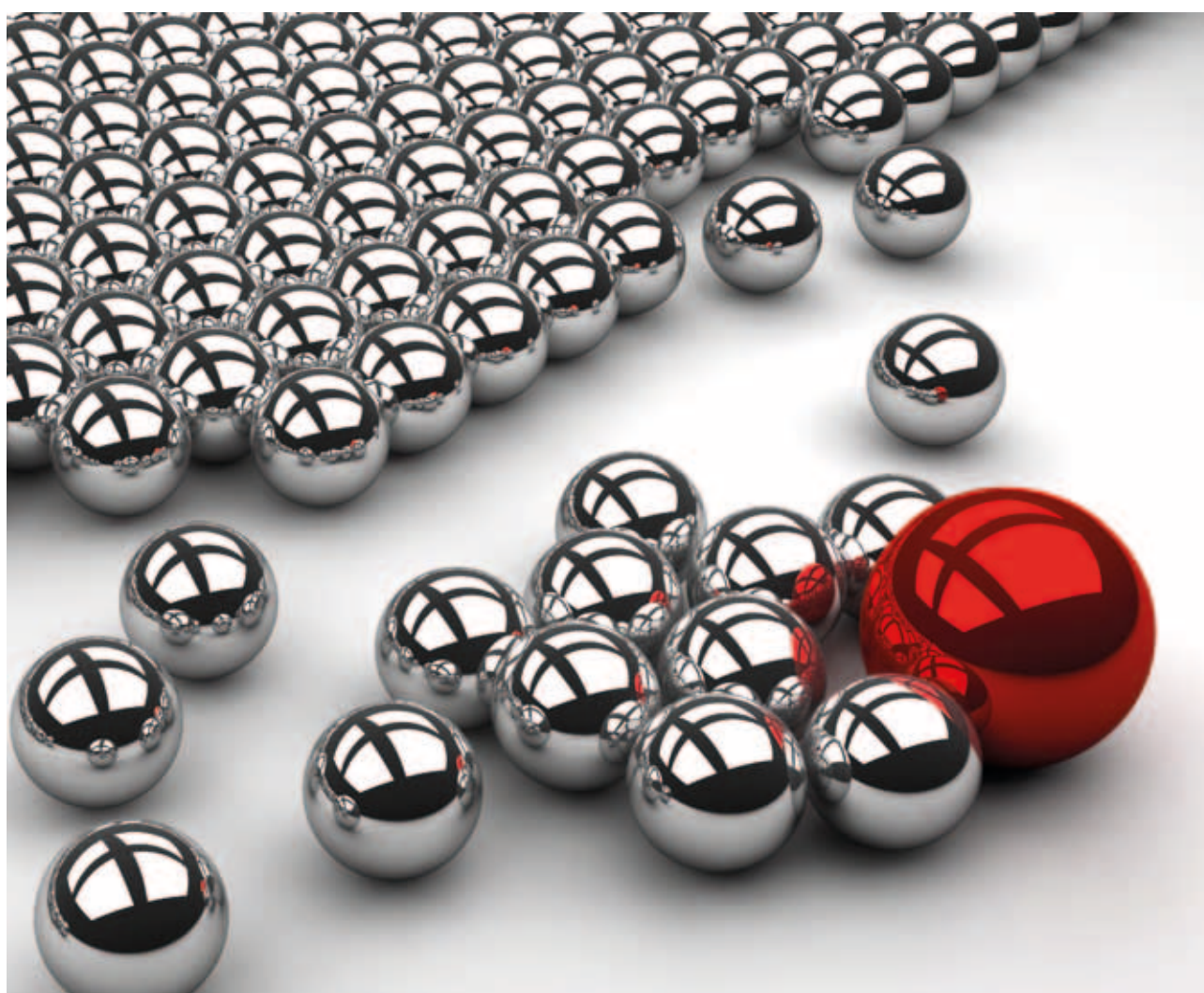


HOW STRATEGIC ARE TRADE STRATEGIES ?

TRENDS FOR EFFECTIVE DEVELOPMENT



International
Trade
Centre

TRADE IMPACT
FOR GOOD

How strategic are trade strategies?

Trends for effective development

About the paper

While more than 40% of existing trade strategies identify trade integration and regionalism as crucial policy areas, less than 3% of the strategies are regional. Nor do they fully build on diversification opportunities in services and manufacturing.

This is one of many trends in trade strategies, which are key policy instruments to build competitiveness in regional and global markets. This report analyses trends from ITC's Trade Strategy Map database, the world's largest collection of trade development strategies.

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For more information on Trade Strategy, see: <http://www.intracen.org/itc/trade-strategy/>

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Foreword

The surest way to get to a destination is to have a good GPS. This is why for over fifty years the International Trade Centre (ITC) has been supporting partner countries in their strategic thinking about how to use trade as an engine of growth, jobs and poverty reduction. The result is more than 100 trade strategies in over 50 countries and increasingly in regions to ensure greater coherence and development of regional value chains.

In many cases, we have worked with countries to develop fully-fledged national export strategies, while in others we have focused on specific sectors or trade support functions. We can go as deep or wide in a particular sector based on the requirements of our partners.

The aim is to provide home-grown strategy solutions based on a real partnership with our stakeholders in-country. ITC's commitment goes beyond simply providing partners with trade development resources. We ensure that the capacity, knowledge and tools to manage the strategy's implementation remain with the country at their pace. Our focus on country ownership combined with our unique approach to value-chain development means that each strategy we facilitate is unique.

We blend cutting edge data analysis – through ITC's own SME Competitiveness Framework and Export Potential Assessment methodology – together with forward thinking business and market intelligence to ensure relevant, realistic and innovative policy recommendations to support value-chain development. This means that each strategy is tailored to meet specific partner needs, which can range from building productive capacities to developing an enabling business environment or harnessing the power of green trade. And this is all done based on clear domestic consultations including the public and the private sector.

One of the key objectives of ITC's work on trade strategies is to ensure alignment with other strategic initiatives in the country. This has allowed us to build a repository of over 1500 documents dealing with trade and development issues in 169 countries. This freely available repository can be accessed via ITC's Trade Strategy Map at www.tradestrategymap.org. The Map includes hundreds of nationally developed plans and roadmaps for export promotion, as well as United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks, Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, Diagnostic Trade Integration Studies and ITC-facilitated national and sector export strategies. A set of 38 searchable variables provide key pieces of information about each document, such as the year of approval, the implementation timeframe, the sector priorities, and the specific trade issues addressed.

The database is part of ITC's contribution to the global policy debate on strategic approaches to trade and development. It is a useful tool for policymaking and analysis, and an important platform to increase transparency and provide visibility to existing policy initiatives in developing countries. But above all, the Trade Strategy Map helps to increase coherence and coordination among different strategic initiatives and flies the flag for the importance of mainstreaming trade in national and regional strategies. The alignment between international and national initiatives is already attracting increasing attention within the international community, as it has become a critical theme in the preparation of UN Development Assistance Frameworks.

This paper is the result of analysing the plans and strategies in the database. It provides trends in the development of trade strategies and hints at gaps or inconsistencies in the advice provided in the documents in our repository. As such, the paper provides an assessment of how 'strategic' trade strategies are, thus contributing to achieve greater coherence and maximize impact.



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Executive Director
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