

A POLICY ROAD MAP FOR EXPORT SUCCESS



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This publication is intended to carry forward the analysis in ITC's National Trade Policy for Export Success (NTPES), published in 2011 and to go further in assisting government and the private sector to understand the factors affecting export success and design programmes that are appropriate to their circumstances. It attempts to advance a coherent policy framework that will help unleash the export potential of firms through trade policy, behind the border, at the border and beyond the border; sets out a road map for exporters to become internationally competitive; includes bibliographic references (p. 39).

Descriptors: **Trade Policy, Export Strategy, Export Promotion, Competitiveness, Developing Countries**

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Preface

Few topics have attracted more attention from international policymakers than economic growth stemming from international trade and global value chain formation. While it is a broad topic with many facets, the principal theme throughout is that when properly harnessed, the force of international trade can propel large-scale growth and development of local economies.

Countries that have successfully harnessed this force to achieve domestic policy goals have done so through export-focused trade policies, linking domestic comparative advantages to global demand. The mechanism of export-led growth is based on the creation of a virtuous cycle where business-friendly regulatory environments lead to increased foreign investment, which in turn leads to increased trade contributing to increased employment and reduced poverty.

The principal tools necessary to implement this mechanism are well known: domestic competition, rule-of-law, strong institutions and business service providers, and trade facilitation. However, the optimal application of each tool varies by country. The needs of international business are constantly shifting and countries have differing geographical and capital endowments. Moreover, economic development can alter the comparative advantage of certain sectors and technological advances can affect the needs of certain industries (and, in some cases, the need *for* certain industries). In short, policies must be remade and rebalanced over time.

In addition, effective export-led growth cannot be attained by simply 'bolting on' the missing element. Instead, laws and regulations must be well informed through dialogue with the private sector and implemented in the right sequence to create a mutually reinforcing framework that fosters competitiveness and enhances communication. Reforms will necessarily create friction in uncompetitive areas, which is why all stakeholders must know and understand the issues and be convinced that the longer-term benefits will more than make up for the shorter-term losses. At the very least, a critical mass of ministries, regulators and private sector organizations must be able to identify and pursue common goals, with each party properly vested in the process.

In light of these realities, 'export success' becomes more of a journey than a destination. Thus, we have decided to structure this publication as a 'road map' for developing countries that embark on the journey towards export-led growth. It brings together research, analysis and experience gathered by countries in implementing trade policy and regulatory reforms. More specifically, this publication provides a diagnostic methodology for policymakers to determine the factors that affect competitiveness with a view to coming up with detailed policy and regulatory reform agenda recommendations.

In addition to policymakers, we hope entrepreneurs and private sector organizations will also be able to use this publication to assess the impact of regulations on the international competitiveness of their businesses and to identify areas where the private sector can inform and influence trade policy.

Most of all, we hope this publication will stimulate increased discussion among all stakeholders, providing a baseline for informed trade policy formation, ultimately leading to inclusive economic growth.

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Coordination of this publication was under the responsibility of Rajesh Aggarwal, Chief, Trade Facilitation and Policy for Business section, ITC.

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