

# Foreign Trade Representation

FTR surveys undertaken by ITC

## Essential questions to network coordinators

CRM	Customer Relationship Management
CSS	Customer Support System
FTR	Foreign Trade Representation/ or Foreign Trade Representatives
TSI	Trade Support Institution
Materials	documents, links, files to be collected as training materials

### 1. Contact information

- Parent organization (and organizational chart)
- Contact details of network supervisors and/or coordinator  
*Materials: organizational chart; business cards*

### 2. Geographical extension

- Countries covered/ cities covered
- Nr of embassies? Nr of trade offices? Nr of trade representatives?  
*Materials: web pages; list of embassies; list of trade offices; maps*

### 3. Institutional linkage and coordination

- Is there one, or several, overseas network acting as trade representation for the country?
- Who are the supervisors / coordinators of the respective networks?
- What are the coordination mechanisms for each network?
- In case there are several networks, is there any integration process under way?  
*Materials: description o the networks and their mission; web pages*

### 4. Strategies

- Is there a National Export Strategy (NES)? What are the...
  - Priority export markets?
  - Priority export products and services?
  - Priority focus and types of export related services to be provided?
  - Priority target clients for these services?
- Is there a clear service specialization between headquarters and trade offices in the field?
- When there are several networks, is there some kind of specialization between them?  
*Materials: National Export Strategy (NES); guidelines; terms of reference*

### 5. Staff status and training

- Are staff in charge of trade representation career diplomats?
- If not, what is their typical background & contractual status?
- How long to they usually stay in the same post and location?
- Which initial training do they receive? Are they offered other training opportunities later on?
- Are there standard terms of reference / job descriptions for the trade representatives?
- Is there a manual to provide them with guidance in their work?
- Do all FTR meet once a year in the capital? Somewhere else? Only some of them?
- Local professional staff is also being contracted, as part of the trade representation?  
*Materials: job descriptions; training programmes; manuals; terms of reference*

## 6. Service delivery

- Which are the essential services delivered by FTR?
- Is there a standard list for the whole network? Different lists in different FTR offices?
- Are some of the services provided for a fee (=charged for)?
- Which services are equally offered by headquarters and by trade offices in the field?
- Which services are clearly different at headquarters and in the field?
- Are some of the services available to foreign customers? Are they only for nationals?
- Which services are available on the Web?

*Materials: lists of services; price-lists; guidelines on service delivery*

## 7. Information systems

- Is there a website for the whole FTR network?
- Are individual FTR offices / embassies developing their own website?
- Is there a standard format / model to follow when creating a website?
- Do the websites reflect the entire offer of services of the trade offices? Or only part of it?
  
- Is there any other online information system allowing HQ and field offices to work together?
- Is there an online CRM or CSS in place? (Customer Support System)
- Does the system provide data on contacts made & requests received from specific clients?
  
- Is there any online trade intelligence system in place? Name? What does it cover?  
(Online enquiry form? Trade alerts? Business opportunities? Etc)

*Materials: web pages; guidelines for creating a website; CSS/CRM reports;*

## 8. Work processes

- Are guidelines available on how to conduct specific trade promotion related tasks?
- Are standard formats and templates being used? "

*Materials: examples of guidelines; terms of reference; templates; formats*

## 9. Monitoring performance

- Are annual targets set for each FTR office?
- Are annual targets set for each professional staff?
- Which success criteria are being used?
- Which reporting is done on office/ staff performance? how often?
- Is there a way to compare the performance of specific offices/ staff members?

*Materials: strategic plan; examples of formats used for evaluation purpose*

## 10. Difficulties and limitations

- What are the main limitations faced by the whole FTR network?
- What are examples of usual limitations faced by individual FTR officers?
- Which resources are critically missing?
- Are there other difficulties or limitations?

(Bertrand J. Monrozier, 17 May 2010)