



MAKING TRADE HAPPEN NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY



International
Trade
Centre



MAKING TRADE HAPPEN

Countries continuously pursue higher standards of living for their citizens. Trade and investment are key to achieving this goal, through increased foreign exchange earnings, a diversified economy, and more and better jobs.

Trade development and competitiveness do not happen by chance. They happen by design. They require a deliberate and considered approach to reducing barriers to trade, eliminating competitiveness issues, identifying growth opportunities, and charting a blueprint for action. All while considering the need for a fairer, inclusive and greener economy.

An ITC-facilitated **National Export Strategy (NES)** is designed to foster trade and competitiveness, by going beyond paper to set in place the required systems structures, and skills to ensure

implementation and achieve the desired results. It is a homegrown solution that not only identifies broad objectives but provides specific answers to critical development issues.

When a country partners with ITC, relevant stakeholders in the public and private sectors come together to lead the design of a strategy to strengthen the foundations of competitiveness.

Putting the strategy into action leads to achieving both immediate economic gains and long-term development goals. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which account for 90% of all firms globally, become more economically resilient and competitive through improved productive capacities, greater preparedness to enter markets, and a more conducive business environment.

WHAT IS A NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY?

A National Export Strategy is a 'whole of country' framework that tactically responds to current and emerging needs and opportunities to improve the performance of export sectors, increase foreign exchange earnings and stimulate job creation, through targeted actions at the firm, business ecosystem and policy levels, to support resilient value chains as well as inclusive and greener trade.

It is the most comprehensive of ITC-facilitated strategies, addressing not only trade promotion, but also productive capacities, the business environment, market-entry conditions and development-related issues.



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WHY DOES MY COUNTRY NEED A NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY?

A National Export Strategy in action do not only promote export growth and business competitiveness, but also supports socioeconomic development.

It is a national vision developed by the country, for the country, with extensive stakeholder inputs. It empowers a partner country to:

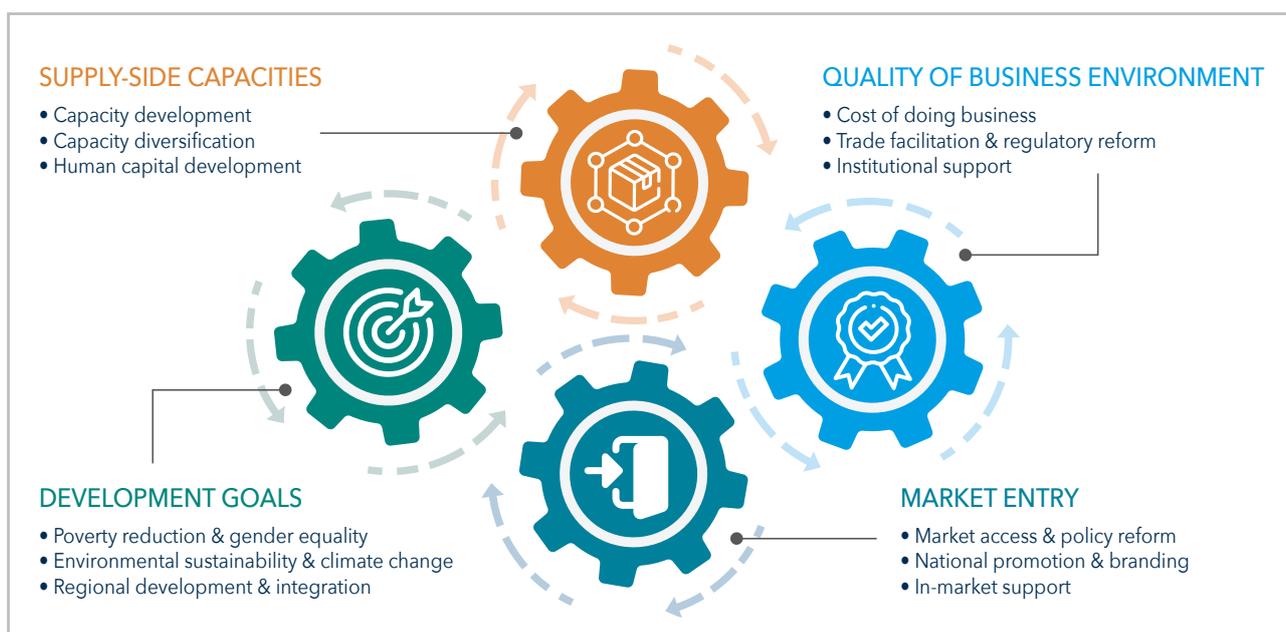
- **Gain a conceptual understanding** of trade and export issues and how to address them;
- **Deepen integration** into regional and international markets;
- **Diversify export products** and destinations by developing existing and new markets;
- **Improve the performance** of small businesses in local and global markets;
- **Stimulate investment** by identifying key priority areas with high potential;
- **Strengthen public-private partnership** and dialogue to drive trade development;
- **Build an implementation management framework** that delivers results.

Each strategy is tailored to national objectives, such as the development of specific sectors, trade support functions or themes, such as women's economic empowerment, youth employment or environmental sustainability.

An ITC-facilitated National Export Strategy is designed to:

- **Address supply-side issues** to respond to opportunities in the international marketplace by increasing productivity, production volume, quality and value addition, diversifying existing product lines and creating new products and services, and investing in workers' vocational and technical competencies.
- **Improve the business environment** by addressing regulatory and administrative procedures that hinder exports, lowering the cost of doing business, and addressing the quality of institutional services supporting small businesses, exporters and investors.
- **Tackle market-entry constraints** by understanding market-entry conditions and improving trade policy through an assessment of tariffs, non-tariff barriers and related entry issues, enhancing the country's international image to boost exports and inward investments, and supporting exporters through export promotion activities, dissemination of trade information and identification of business opportunities.
- **Reach development goals** by boosting trade's contributions to socioeconomic development and inclusive and fairer growth, supporting greener trade, environmental sustainability and climate change adaptation, and addressing constraints to regional development and integration.

MY COUNTRY ALREADY HAS TRADE POLICIES AND STRATEGIES IN PLACE – HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT?



An ITC-facilitated National Export Strategy is the strategy of strategies, building on the best of existing plans and policies while highlighting new, concrete actions to get results. There is no duplication of work.

It is designed through collaboration and coordination among all key trade-related stakeholders, to support export development and business competitiveness. It is anchored in **strong public-private dialogue and partnership**, and builds upon comprehensive market-driven analyses conducted at the policy, business ecosystem and firm levels to identify and define key priorities for improving trade and investment performance.

The strategy lays out **targeted, measurable steps** to strengthen all aspects of trade in a country, from production to promotion.

An ITC-supported National Export Strategy is:

- **Country-owned:** The partner country sets the priorities. Those who will manage, implement and benefit from the strategy are involved in its design. ITC offers its well-established strategy design methodology and advises throughout the process.
- **Inclusive and participative:** All those working on export development and competitiveness in a country fully engage in the design process, from beginning to end.
- **Built on existing strategies and plans:** The strategy integrates findings and recommendations of existing plans, policies and strategies to eliminate duplication and ensure consistency with government objectives.



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- **Comprehensive in scope:** The strategy tackles a wide range of issues impeding international competitiveness, including supply-side constraints, quality of the business environment, market entry requirements and development-related issues.
- **Needs-based and market-driven:** With limited time and resources, the focus is on areas that provide the best prospects for export development and small business competitiveness in line with international market conditions.
- **Capacity building-oriented:** Through the design process, a country's stakeholders gain the ability to design, manage and implement its own export strategies.
- **Specific and measurable:** The strategy defines what needs to be done, by whom, by what date, with what resources, to achieve which goals.

Targets and impact measures are also specified. Partners are clear about their commitments, promoting transparency and collaboration.

A National Export Strategy succeeds where other plans may not because it:

- **Is owned** and championed by the highest levels of the public and private sectors;
- **Prioritizes actions** and areas of improvement, based on available resources;
- **Responds to national needs** and international market demand;
- **Has implementation built into the design**, making it practical.

ITC provides support at every step, from design to implementation, bringing more than 50 years of international trade and development experience, including **export strategy work since 2003**.



HOW IS A NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY DESIGNED?

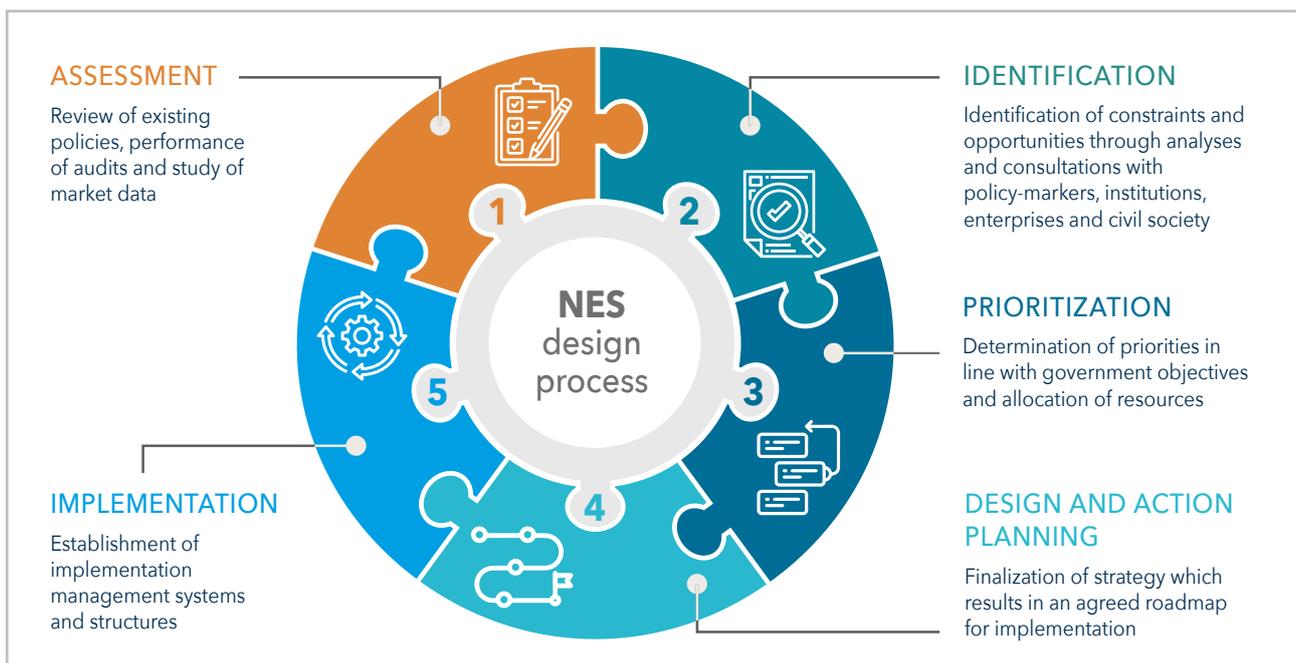
A full National Export Strategy can be designed in 10-12 months.

The process is led by key trade-related stakeholders in government, business, institutions and civil society, using ITC's well-established methodology, training and tools.

The strategy is aimed at strengthening priority sectors and key trade support functions. In general, a National Export Strategy spotlights **priority sectors** – for example, coffee, wood processing or tourism – and **key trade support functions** – such as e-commerce, logistics or quality management.

Steps to designing a National Export Strategy include:

- **Assess** a country's current position, performance and competitiveness through specialized audits. Existing development plans and strategies are reviewed to ensure consistency with government objectives.
- **Identify** constraints that limit export development, based on a clear understanding of strengths, weaknesses and market opportunities and requirements; as well as define the best market development opportunities for sustainable and inclusive economic growth.
- **Prioritize** among sectors and within sectors to identify the best opportunities for sustainable economic growth, and among trade support functions to improve the overall business environment.
- **Design** a detailed plan of action endorsed by all stakeholders, defining what activities need to be done, by whom, by what date, with what resources, to achieve which goals.





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WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY IS DESIGNED?

After a National Export Strategy is designed and endorsed by all key stakeholders, implementation can go into full effect.

To experience the full extent of strategy benefits, a country can work with ITC on managing implementation of the strategy.

ITC's strategy implementation support enables a partner country to:

- **Set up effective structures and systems** for stakeholders to collaborate and coordinate activities, resolve issues and keep the strategy current to respond to changing market dynamics, in a way that promotes accountability and transparency. Building strong coordination among all key stakeholders reduces gaps and duplication of effort, and channels resources to implement strategy priorities.
- Mobilize the skills and resources needed to manage implementation, through **capacity building, and technical and advisory support**. Capacity building delivered by ITC in-person and online is flexible and tailored to the needs of the country. Advisory support is based on ITC's global expertise and best practices, including those drawn from its vast network of partners and practitioners. Training module topics include enabling public-private dialogue and coordination; resource planning and mobilization; data collection, tracking results and reporting progress; and sensitization, communications and outreach.

- **Use a customizable tool** to plan, coordinate, measure and prioritize aspects of the implementation process. ITC provides a web-based application called the **Strategy Implementation Management Tool (www.tradestrategy.org)**, which builds on and complements existing tracking and monitoring tools in the country, creating conditions necessary for transparency, accountability and accuracy.

The Strategy Implementation Management Tool enables partners in ministries, institutions, sector associations and development agencies to:

- **Collect**, share and archive information on strategy implementation in an interactive way;
- **Access** up-to-date and customized data on implementation progress, new projects and engagement modalities, searchable by donor, institution or geographic location;
- **Identify** gaps and duplication between existing initiatives and strategic priorities, as well as implementation bottlenecks to better direct efforts and resources;
- **Create** reports, graphs and communication materials on implementation progress, to share with the public.

ITC's implementation management support can be tailored to a partner country's needs.



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+100
Trade Strategies

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Sectors

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