



TPSA Conducts a Training Workshop for Indonesian Government Officials on How to Select SMEs for Canadian Trade Shows

Familiarizing Indonesian Ministry of Trade officials with Canadian trade shows and training them on how to best select appropriate participants is a critical component in the effort to increase Indonesian exports to Canada. Understanding the necessary tools and frameworks to select the right participants for Canadian trade shows is important in order to ensure their successful participation.

As part of the Canada-Indonesia Trade and Private Sector Assistance (TPSA) project, a two-day workshop was held in Jakarta to assist Indonesian Ministry of Trade officials in selecting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) for trade shows in Canada. The 27 officials came from two main departments actively involved in trade shows abroad: IETC (Indonesia Export Training Centre) and DGNED (Directorate General for National Export Development).

The two-day workshop, conducted by TFO Associate Marc Germain, provided tools and information to enable participants to understand the requirements for selecting the right companies for participation in trade shows. The workshop was composed of three main sections:

1. brainstorming knowledge about Canada
2. understanding the Canadian landscape for trade shows
3. criteria for selecting SMEs for Canadian trade shows



Marc Germain captures brainstorming ideas.

Brainstorming About Canada

During the first section, participants were asked to individually share the following:

- What do they know about Canada?
- What do they know about doing business in Canada?
- What do they know about Canadian trade shows?



Based on participant feedback, a list of important information about Canada and Canadian trade shows was developed and shared with all participants.

Understanding the Canadian Landscape for Trade Shows

For the second section of the training—understanding the Canadian landscape for trade shows—participants were divided into four teams and each team assigned a case study. The teams were asked to list the pros and cons of the Canadian trade shows described in the case studies. They were then asked to list the benefits and challenges of participating in a Canadian trade show and to identify the desired outcomes of participation.

Selecting the appropriate trade show and the right SMEs to attend requires a good understanding of general market trends (e.g., demographics), as well as specific product and industry information. Participating teams were asked to come up with a list of general market characteristics and demographic trends in the marketplace that best describe Canada as a country to do business with. Participants were presented with readily available online tools and were trained on using these tools for selecting the right SME.

Criteria for Selecting SMEs for Canadian Trade Shows

In the third section of the training, teams were assigned case studies on evaluating applicants for trade shows in North America. Each team was asked to identify positive and negative points about the companies presented in the case studies. They then used these positive and negative points to create a master ranking list and designated each point as either an essential or non-essential criterion. Most of the criteria produced can be used across different industry sectors and applied to different trade shows, unless the show requires technical or other specific criteria for exhibiting.

Based on the master ranking, teams were then asked to develop a scoring system that could be used to choose appropriate SMEs for trade



A team discusses criteria for SME selection.

shows. Each team presented their system to the rest of the group, after which they jointly decided on the best and simplest scoring system to be used for selecting trade show participants.

“Being involved in several trainings supported by TPSA Project, now I have the confidence to apply some of the survey questions in assessing our SMEs’ capacities. I see many of Indonesia’s SMEs have the capacity, especially in agribusiness commodities such as coffee, cocoa beans, and tea leaves. What we need to pay more attention to are related to administration and documents, consistency, and safety products in order for them to fulfill the required standard to export abroad. I see Canada as a great potential market, as well as a gateway for Indonesian SMEs to the United States. I am very optimistic on that.”

—WIJAYA
Head of Section: Promotion and Publication, IETC,
Indonesia Ministry of Trade.

Finally, using the material developed in the workshop, participants were asked to develop a comprehensive application form to be used as a general application that could be adapted for specific trade shows. Teams then presented their findings. Mr. Germain collected the recommendations and combined the different elements to create a master application form.



Participants at the end of a successful workshop.

Participant Feedback

In a post-training questionnaire, all participants who responded reported that their skills and knowledge had improved as a result of taking the course. Ninety-six per cent said they would use the knowledge from the training in their work and that their new level of confidence in applying the knowledge ranged from “good” to “excellent.”

The participants reported high overall satisfaction with the training. Overall, 62 per cent gave a satisfaction rating of “excellent” and 38 per cent gave a rating of “very good.”

Conclusions

The workshop accomplished its objectives of providing the participants with the necessary tools and framework to select appropriate SMEs to participate in Canadian trade shows. While the participants were involved in the actual development of the framework and tools, the challenge will now be how to ensure they are used effectively within the different ministry units represented in the workshop. If used, these will help establish a standard process. Ministry officials should ensure the tools are integrated within each unit and that there is a process whereby the units communicate with each other on a regular basis.

Another challenge was noted in the workshop—the fact that several ministries are involved with selecting SMEs for international trade shows. This highlights the fact that there is also a need to bring the ministries involved in trade shows together so that efforts are coordinated and integrated into a master export-promotion framework with a common country brand.

About the TPSA Project

TPSA is a five-year C\$12-million project funded by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada. The project is executed by The Conference Board of Canada, and the primary implementation partner is the Directorate General for National Export Development, Ministry of Trade.

TPSA is designed to provide training, research, and technical assistance to Indonesian government agencies, the private sector—particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)—academics, and civil society organizations on trade-related information, trade policy analysis, regulatory reforms, and trade and investment promotion by Canadian, Indonesian, and other experts from public and private organizations.

The overall objective of TPSA is to support higher sustainable economic growth and reduce



poverty in Indonesia through increased trade and trade-enabling investment between Indonesia and Canada. TPSA is intended to increase sustainable and gender-responsive trade and investment opportunities, particularly for Indonesian SMEs, and to increase the use of trade and investment analysis by Indonesian stakeholders for expanded trade and investment partnerships between Indonesia and Canada.

The expected immediate outcomes of TPSA are:

- improved trade and investment information flows between Indonesia and Canada, particularly for the private sector, SMEs, and women entrepreneurs, including trade-related environmental risks and opportunities;
- enhanced private sector business links between Indonesia and Canada, particularly for SMEs;

- strengthened analytical skills and knowledge of Indonesian stakeholders on how to increase trade and investment between Indonesia and Canada;
- improved understanding of regulatory rules and best practices for trade and investment.

For further information, please contact the Project Office in Jakarta, Indonesia:

Mr. Gregory A. Elms, Field Director

Canada-Indonesia Trade and Private Sector Assistance (TPSA) Project

Canada Centre, World Trade Centre 5, 15th Floor
Jl. Jend. Sudirman Kav 29-31 Jakarta 12190,
Indonesia

Phone: +62-21-5296-0376, or 5296-0389

Fax: +62-21-5296-0385

E-mail: greg@tpsaproject.com