

# TRADING *Post*



Energising Zimbabwe's Export Growth

## APRIL 2023



### TOP STORIES

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# NEXT SHE EXPORTER APPLICATIONS FOR SECOND CYCLE

## NOW OPEN



By Karen Mukwedeza

By capacitating women entrepreneurs in their export journey, the program has created an environment where women entrepreneurs can thrive and contribute to the economic growth of Zimbabwe.

As these businesses developed their products, a positive progressive competition exercise was introduced around the programme to motivate participants.

Under the competition, participants were awarded based on the growth of their business during the programme.

This has enabled each participant to gain a greater understanding of the export industry, and to apply their knowledge to their own businesses.

The winner for the first cycle of the programme was Choice Rusike, founder of JadeSave, a female owned business on chemical manufacturing in the building sector.

The run-up in the inaugural cycle, Geraldine Zikwature, Founder of EzeekKleen said the programme opened partnership opportunities with companies in the region, who are willing to distribute her products.

"The Next She-Exporter debunked an earlier belief I had that exporting formally is complicated.

"If anything, following the right channel carries many benefits, and now, thanks to the Next She-Exporter program, my company has partners in the region that will share in the EzeekKleen dream of becoming an African powerhouse."

**T**he ZimTrade-run programme, Next She Exporter is entering the next cycle with applications open for local female-led businesses that are looking to develop their export capacities.

The NEXT Program was successfully launched in April 2022, at an event attended by over 150 women business leaders across Zimbabwe.

A wide array of sectors were represented at the event, including clothing and textiles, agribusiness, processed foods, manufacturing (detergents, hair care products), horticulture and arts and crafts.

Following the launch, selected women-led businesses that made it through the selection process went through a year-long intensive capacity building exercise, whose focus was on developing their export capacities so that they produce products and services that can compete well in international markets.

Some of the interventions focused on branding, product quality, and packaging. Trainings were also extended to skills in marketing for international competitiveness, with support from established exporters.

Here, digital marketing and negotiation skills were some of the major take aways from the trainings.

The capacity building exercise also involved mentorship programmes with established female business leaders in Zimbabwe.

Overall, the first cycle of the program was successful in equipping women entrepreneurs with the resources, skills, and networks they need to succeed.

In addition to providing access to professional business advice, the program also emphasized the importance of mentorship, providing participants with access to mentors from the business and economic sectors who can provide guidance and advice.

The program also offered personalized support for each participant, including access to financial resources, market opportunities, and business development advice.

This has enabled the participants to successfully develop and grow their enterprises, with many participants reporting business growth.

In addition to the economic benefits of the program, there have also been significant social benefits, as it has helped to create a more inclusive and equitable economy.





**F**ARMERS IN Midlands Province who are part of the ZimTrade-developed Peas Cluster were told of the importance of meeting international standards at a Global GAP awareness seminar held earlier this month.

The Midlands Peas Cluster is in the production of mangetout and sugar snap peas targeted for the European market.

The seminar, organized by ZimTrade, exposed the farmers to a wide-range of issues that will improve the competitiveness of their products in international markets.

At the seminar, the farmers taken through the importance of adhering to standards and attain necessary certifications as these will unlock access to lucrative markets.

Standards and certifications are a key component of export competitiveness and without them farmers have limited or no access to the lucrative global markets.

Farmers operating under the Midlands Peas Cluster were encouraged to follow and adopt specific standards that are widely recognized, which makes it easy for their produce to compete in international markets.

The seminar exposed members of the cluster to the GLOBAL GAP, a voluntary standard that was estab-

-lished following increasing food safety concerns by supermarkets and retailers in the late 90s.

Participants were given a run through of the benefits of obtaining the standard, such as that, it reduces farmers exposure to food safety and product safety reputation risks.

The standard was said to bring greater efficiency in production, and led to improve business performance and efficiency of farm processes and management.

The standard also minimizes waste of vital resources and requires a general approach to farming that would build best practices for generations to come.

The importance of good record keeping was emphasised, and a brief overview of topics covered in Global GAP was given.

These included complaints Handling Product Recall/Withdrawal Procedure Handling of non-conforming products, among a host of others.

During the training, participants understood that Global GAP adds value to products, and enables farmers to gain access to new local and global customers, markets, suppliers, and retailers.

Further to Global Gap, the participants were also advised on the need to create stronger linkages with key stakeholder, who include buyers, logistics companies, and financiers.

The attendance by other strategic

partners at the seminar added weight to the activities, as they also made presentations on other subjects of interest of the Cluster.

For example, NMB, a commercial bank, presented financing options that are the cluster could consider exploiting to access much required financing.

Most horticulture export orders fail to be fulfilled by farmers due to a lack of financing to pay for equipment, labour, inputs, and the general production of the crops.

Logistics company BAK Logistics, also gave the farmers an appreciation of how logistics for fresh produce was handled by the company.

Considering that Zimbabwe is a land-linked country, seaports in Mozambique, South Africa and Namibia are usually used by exporters with bulk produce that take a little time to perish, whilst the fast-to-perish produce use air freight.

The Walvis Bay port was suggested as a good option to us for the cluster, as it took between 3-5 days to reach the port by road.

The Export Credit Guarantee Company (ECGC) of Zimbabwe also attended the event and gave farmers insight into how farmers can minimize risk in export business.

Some of the common losses may arise from a variety of commercial and political risks inherent in all export transactions.

By having insurance, the Midlands Peas Cluster could enhance their capacity to compete in the international markets and enable them to break into new markets, introduce new products and take up new buyers.

A representative from Agritex also spoke on the agronomic issues around the production of export grade peas crop, and emphasized the need to use approved chemicals as per Global GAP guidelines.

Further to this, a representative from Lingfield Farm – a current exporter into Europe – gave the participants information on how to handle the harvest to ensure produce is kept at its best up to the destination.



# MALAYSIA SUGAR MARKET

## 2023



### UNLOCKING MALAYSIAN MARKETS THROUGH SUGAR EXPORTS

By Kudakwashe Tirivavi

**Z**imbabwean sugar exporters have a big opportunity to succeed in the Malaysian market, as demand for sugar imports is increasing and Malaysian consumers have a similar taste preference to Zimbabweans.

Malaysia is also a good gateway to other markets in South-East Asia, which may unlock Zimbabwe's access to more markets in the region.

Zimbabwe's sugar industry is one of the country's largest agricultural sectors and is set to become a major export earner in the coming years.

According to the most recent data from the United Nations COMTRADE database on international trade, Zimbabwean exports of sugars and sugar confectionery was US\$17.14 Million during 2021.

Zimbabwe's main sugar markets are South Africa, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Mozambique, and Malawi.

As Zimbabwe seeks to expand its markets, producers need to begin looking beyond these markets to

find new opportunities in distant countries such as Malaysia.

As an emerging economy and a major player in Asia's food market, Malaysia can provide a lucrative market for Zimbabwean sugar producers looking for new sources of revenue.

As a result, understanding how to access the Malaysian sugar market is key for Zimbabwean exporters.

#### What makes Malaysia an ideal export partner?

If one is a sugar exporter looking to expand into markets outside of Africa, Malaysia is an ideal partner.

Sugary foods are a huge part of the national diet, consumed daily by Malaysians who combine sugars







with other food items or simply use them as a sweetener.

Unfortunately, Malaysian manufacturers do not produce enough sugar to meet the country's current demand.

For example, according to a report by Knowledge Sourcing Intelligence, over the first seven months of 2022, they have imported 2,165,000 tons and exported just

330,000 tons—which points towards an undersupplied market in need of external partners.

This is where Zimbabwean exporters come in by tapping into this market opportunity and offering their unique product set to Malaysian companies and consumers, they stand to be rewarded with increased revenue streams that could help fuel further growth in other areas too.

There are a few key facts that make Malaysia an attractive choice for Zimbabwean sugar exporters.

For example, Malaysian raw sugar imports are entirely duty-free and refined sugar imports are also duty-free but capped annually at 100 thousand tons to support refiners.

Per capita sugar consumption is

increasing in the market, thanks to rising incomes and the switch to more modern diets with more processed foods and drinks.

Further to this, Malaysia is one of the world's most important raw sugar importers. According to OEC, in 2021, Malaysia imported US\$674 million in raw sugar, becoming the 11th largest importer of raw sugar in the world.

These factors make this an ideal time for Zimbabwean exporters targeting the Malaysian market.

Zimbabwean exporters are in an opportune position to capitalize on the growth of the Malaysian market, particularly when it comes to Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG's), Halal products and pharmaceuticals.

The Malaysian economy is known for its strong consumer spending, making it an ideal destination for exporters looking to diversify their portfolios.

Additionally, there is a large and growing demand for Halal products in Malaysia, providing a huge opportunity for exporters from Zimbabwe to tap into this growing market.

Malaysia is also becoming an important partner in the fields of services, Fintech, and other tech

nological advances, further expanding the potential opportunities available to Zimbabwean sugar exporters.

By leveraging Malaysia's established infrastructure and trade agreements with other countries, Zimbabwean companies can explore new markets and increase their customer base.

In terms of market entry strategies, developing relationships with local industry professionals is essential when it comes to entering a new market like Malaysia.

Having contacts on the ground can be invaluable, as they will be more aware of government regulations and key players in the industry.

It also gives importers in Malaysia a sense of trust and reassurance that their needs will be met reliably and efficiently by Zimbabwean suppliers.

Exporters can attend trade fairs in Malaysia such as the Malaysia International Halal Showcase or MIHAS which is an annual trade fair organised by the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation.

It aims to facilitate the sourcing and selling of quality halal products and services globally.





**E**ssential oils have been used for a very long time especially for the therapeutic benefits that they offer.

Today, essential oils have become increasingly more popular as more people seek the natural and holistic options for improving health and general wellbeing.

Some essential oils used in the beauty and personal care industry include the following: lavender, avocado, marula, baobab, tea tree, peppermint, rose, chamomile, frankincense, geranium and eucalyptus.

These essential oils are greatly known for their soothing and calming properties, as well as the ability to improve general skin health and promote relaxation.

ZimTrade, in partnership with various local stakeholders, is developing clusters for the baobab and marula value chains. These resources are found naturally and in abundance in Zimbabwe.

From these value chains, essential oils will be produced for export to different markets.

The key element for all exports is to know how best to label and package the product for the respective market.

One key market for essential oils is the beauty and personal care

industry.

Essential oils are used widely in cosmetics, skincare products, as well as hair care products.

Their greatest value comes from the ability to provide a somewhat natural fragrance, as well as their therapeutic nature.

An example is lavender oil which is often used in skincare products to soothe and calm the skin, while tea tree oil is common in shampoos and conditioners to promote good health for the hair and scalp.

Essential oils are also a key ingredient in the healthcare industry.

Essential oils are used as a remedy by alternative healthcare practitioners, and this includes aromatherapists and naturopaths.

Essential oils are essentially used in massage therapy, as they are utilized to alleviate stress and anxiety, promote relaxation, and ease any muscle tension.

The essential oils also work very well as diffusers to purify the air and help promote respiratory health.

The health care and beauty and personal care industries are good markets to target for supply. Processing is easier for these natural resources.

The clusters groups are receiving the respective trainings and

financial support in order to build viable and sustainable operations.

An important market for essential oils is the food and beverage industry.

The essential oils are used to provide flavor to various foods and beverages, including teas and cocktails as well as baked goods and sauces.

Some essential oils used for cooking include lemon, peppermint, and basil.

The home care industry is also a key market for essential oils.

In this industry, essential oils are widely used as natural cleaning agents, as they disinfect surfaces and eliminate odours.

Essential oils are also used as laundry detergents and fabric softeners to add a fresh scent to clothing. An example is lavender flavored fabric softener.

Essential oils have many uses and applications including the following.

■ **Aromatherapy:** The essential oils are used to add fragrance in diffusers, and they are added to bathwater to promote relaxation, give a good bath fragrance and to reduce the levels of stress.

■ **Skincare:** The essential oils in skincare products provide a soothing and healing effect especially to dry or damaged skin.

■ **Hair care:** Essential oils are commonly used in shampoos and conditioners as they promote healthy hair and scalp.

■ **Massage therapy:** Essential oils are often used during massage therapy sessions to enhance the therapy experience and to promote relaxation and reduce muscle tension.

**Cooking:** Some foods and beverages are flavored using essential oils. This natural flavor is an added benefit especially to the health conscious.

■ **Cleaning:** Essential oils are widely used as natural cleaning agents as they allow for easier disinfection of surfaces and elimination odors.

Some of the key country markets that essential oils can be exported to include - United States of America; France; Germany; China; Japan; India; Brazil; and Australia.

However, this depends on the type of essential oils.





# DISRUPTIVE EXPORT STRATEGIES AND TECHNOLOGIES CAN CREATE NEW MARKETS

By Sharon Chingonzo (Opinion)

**POTENTIAL EXPORTERS** often face significant challenges in building and sustaining their export businesses.

One key strategy for these businesses to create new markets is through the use of disruptive export strategies and technologies.

Disruptive technologies are those that fundamentally change the way business is done, creating new markets, and disrupting existing ones.

Here are some ways developing countries can leverage disruptive export strategies and technologies to create new markets:

## EMBRACE E-COMMERCE

E-commerce is a disruptive technology that has the potential to transform the way business is conducted.

New exporters can leverage e-commerce to reach new markets and customers, regardless of their location.

By embracing e-commerce, local businesses can overcome the challenges of distance and logistics and reach customers all over the world.

According to an UNCTAD report, the average share of internet users who made purchases online increased from 53 percent before the pandemic (2019) to 60 percent following the onset of the pandemic (2020/21), across 66 countries with statistics available.

## LEVERAGE THE POWER OF SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have become powerful tools for businesses to reach new customers.

Local companies can leverage social media to create brand awareness and reach new markets.

By using social media to engage with customers, businesses in developing countries can build relationships with customers and create new markets.

A snap survey done by stat counter, shows that Facebook and Twitter were the most used social media sites in Zimbabwe between April 2022 to March 2023

## DEVELOP CUTTING-EDGE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

By developing cutting-edge products and services, developing countries can differentiate themselves in the global market.

In order to develop these products and services, it's important for local companies to invest in research and development.

This will help them to create products and services that are disruptive and have the potential to create new markets.

The innovation hubs that the Government has mandated tertiary institutions to introduce will go a long way in improving our research and development efforts towards coming up with new products.

## USE BIG DATA ANALYTICS

Big data analytics is a disruptive technology that can help businesses in developing countries to gain insights into customer behavior and preferences.

By leveraging big data analytics, businesses can create personalised marketing campaigns, improve customer engagement and create new markets.

## USE BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY

Blockchain technology is a disruptive technology that has the potential to transform the way business is done.

Local companies can leverage blockchain technology to create new markets in areas like finance, supply chain management, and logistics.

By using blockchain technology, local business can create more secure and transparent business processes, which will help them to gain the trust of customers and create new markets.

The above solutions might seem out of reach for most businesses but there are inexpensive ways of implementing these solutions and systems, that could take one's business to another level.

With the importance the Government of Zimbabwe is placing on innovation and industrialisation, businesses can thrive by supporting initiatives such as innovations being developed by tertiary institutions.

Most tertiary institutions in the country now have innovation hubs with groundbreaking technologies being developed, which require commercialisation.

The private sector can support these initiatives and work together with these institutions to pivot their businesses for success in export markets.





# ZIMTRADE, TAZEPA CAPACITATE NEW EXPORTERS

By Natalie Franciko

**G**lobal trade is an important aspect of modern commerce, and understanding the procedures and regulations that govern it is essential for any organization looking to succeed in this field.

In today's global economy, businesses are looking for innovative ways to expand their market reach and increase their profitability.

One of the most effective ways to achieve this is through international trade.

However, navigating the complexities of the export trade cycle can be a daunting task, especially for those who are new to the process.

Thus, ZimTrade recently teamed up with TAZEPA to host an export practice and procedures workshop for new exporters and freight forwarding organizations.

This comprehensive training covered a range of topics, from the roles of multilateral agencies like the WTO, WCO, and ICC, to the intricacies of the export trade cycle and international transactions.

Participants also learnt how to establish export sales contracts, navigate customs processes, and comply with rules of origin and other regulatory requirements. The workshop placed special

emphasis on the Incoterms 2020, a set of international commercial terms that can help businesses streamline their trade operations and avoid costly mistakes.

Participants were also advised on the need to eliminate export non-compliance and mitigate hidden costs, as well as understanding of the regulations and procedures that govern global trade.

The training was delivered by industry experts who shared their practical experiences and insights, making the workshop highly interactive and engaging.

During the workshop, participants learned about the different types of Incoterms, including EXW (Ex Works), FOB (Free on Board), CIF (Cost, Insurance, and Freight), and DDP (Delivered Duty Paid).

They were also taught how to choose the right Incoterm for their business needs and how to incorporate it into their sales and purchasing contracts.

Another key subject covered in the training programs is the importance of establishing an export sales contract.

This is a critical step in the export trade cycle, as it establishes the terms and conditions of the transaction and ensures that all parties involved understand their roles and responsibilities.

In addition to these topics, ZimTrade and TAZEPA also covered the roles of regulatory bodies such as customs and standards, as well as the exporter's responsibilities in relation to compliance and rules of origin.

This is essential knowledge for professionals looking to succeed in the world of international trade, as non-compliance can result in costly penalties and damage to a business's reputation.

Further to this, the training programs also provide guidance on where to obtain market information and data, as well as issues around documentary letters of credit.

Documentary letters of credit is a type of payment arrangement commonly used in international trade, and understanding how to use them effectively can help businesses minimize risk and ensure timely payment for goods and services.

This information is vital for businesses to make informed decisions about market entry, product development, and marketing strategies.

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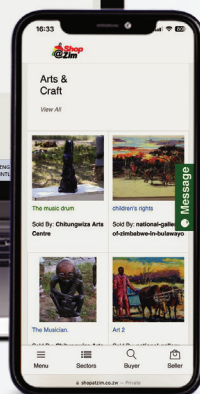
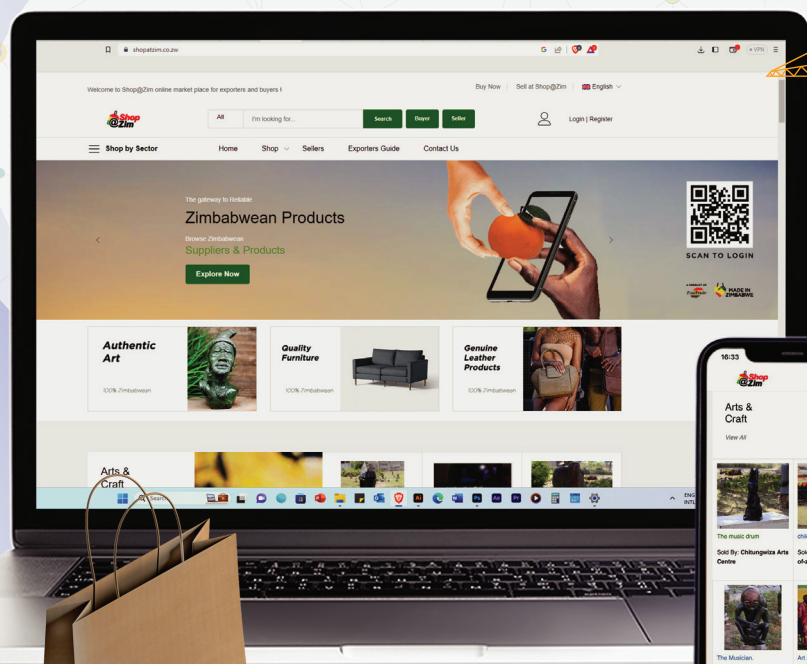
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# COUNTRY FOCUS: NIGERIA

By William Gaviyau

**Z**IMTRADE RECENTLY concluded a market survey of Nigeria to explore export opportunities for Zimbabwean companies.

The survey, whose full results will be presented to local companies, revealed huge opportunities for Zimbabwean products across sectors, including services.

This article will provide a brief overview of the market.

Nigeria is a country located on the western coast of Africa and has a diverse geography, with climates ranging from arid to humid equatorial.

The national capital is Abuja while Lagos is the country's leading commercial and industrial city. Nigeria is bordered to the north by Niger, to the east by Chad and Cameroon, to the south by the Gulf of Guinea of the Atlantic Ocean, and to the west by Benin.

Nigeria is not only large in area but also is Africa's most populous country. According to World Bank (2022), Nigeria's population in 2021 was estimated to be 213.4 million.

## NIGERIA'S ECONOMY

Nigeria's economy expanded by 3.6 percent in 2021 after contracting by 1.8 percent in 2020, supported on the supply side by a 4.4 percent increase in non-oil production against an 8.3 percent decline in the oil sector.

The fiscal deficit narrowed to 4.8 percent of GDP in 2021 from 5.4 percent in 2020, due to a modest increase in revenues.

With high expectations of having Dangote refinery fully operational by end of 2023, this would reduce the need to import fuel as the refinery has the capacity to satisfy local demand.

## NIGERIA TRADE

In terms of trade, Nigeria is signatory to the ECOWAS and AfCFTA trade agreements, among others.

Nigeria operates a top-down government-driven standards system to regulate imported products.

There are two primary government agencies which regulate product standards, the Standards Organization of Nigeria (SON) – the apex standardization body in Nigeria and the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC)

which controls the importation of food, drugs, cosmetics, and drugs.

Standards set by SON and NAFDAC are mandatory and must be met before any product can be registered or certified.

## NIGERIA'S TRADE WITH WORLD

According to Trade Map, Nigeria's trade with the world had a favourable trade balance from 2017 to 2019 though it was declining.

In 2020, a negative trade balance of US\$19.65 billion was recorded with an improvement in 2021 to US\$4.87 billion.

Exports recorded a decline in 2020 which could be attributed to COVID19 while imports continued on a growth trajectory from US\$28.84 billion in 2017 to US\$52.44 billion in 2021.

The main products being exported to the world by Nigeria included mineral fuels, ships, fertilisers and cocoa products, amongst others, while some of the imported products from the



world were mineral fuels, machinery, cereals and plastics.

### **NIGERIA'S TRADE WITH SADC**

Over the 5-year period, 2017 to 2021, Nigeria has a favourable trade balance with the SADC region.

The highest exports amounted to US\$3.734 billion in 2019 and the lowest amounted to US\$1.932 billion in 2017. Imports from SADC amounted to US\$2.09 billion in 2019 and US\$0.488 billion in 2017.

The largest source markets from SADC were South Africa and Eswatini, accounting for 72 percent and 12 percent of total imports respectively.

Namibia and Tanzania had 4 percent apiece while Zimbabwe supplied 1% of the imports. In 2021, Nigeria's imports from SADC amounted to US\$738.688 million.

### **TRADE WITH ZIMBABWE**

There has not been much trade between Zimbabwe and Nigeria, and there is potential to improve in this area.

According to Trade Map, exports to Nigeria have fluctuated over the years, having dropped between 2014 to 2018, from US\$3.04 million in 2014 to US\$0.70 million.

Exports have since gone up, steadying above US\$3 million since 2019, signifying the improvement in trade between the two countries.

The main products exported being tobacco and products of milling industries.

While Zimbabwe's imports from Nigeria have been averaging US\$0.5 million for the last 10 years, with the highest value of US\$0.66 million recorded in 2018.

### **TRADE OPPORTUNITIES FOR ZIMBABWE**

According to ITC Export Potential Map, products with greatest export potential from Zimbabwe to Nigeria are raw cane sugar, horticulture produce, essential oils, leather and leather products and building and construction materials.

In order to take advantage of the opportunities available in Nigeria local companies can consider setting up a joint venture, working with investors, finding local partners, and building a strong network in the Nigerian business community.

To guide against dealing with fraudulently business operations, businesses are urged to approach the Zimbabwean Embassy in Nigeria and Nigerian Embassy of Zimbabwe to assist.

With the right preparation and the right partners, Zimbabwean businesses can capitalize on the many market opportunities in Nigeria.





# COMPANIES MUST TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EXHIBITIONS

one place and companies who are prepared are likely to score big from trade fairs.

For example, companies who took part at the Fruit Logistica – the largest fresh fruit and vegetables fair in the world – earlier this year presented unique produce from Zimbabwe and recorded deals over US\$15 million.

Some of the orders are huge and the companies are expanding their operations and working with outgrowers to help in meeting the demand.

There is also a group of sculptors from Masvingo that ZimTrade facilitated to attend an exhibition in Ambiente, Germany and they have since started to export to the market.

Thus, with no doubt, participation at trade fairs is likely to bring tangible results in orders.

Experiences from previous trade exhibitions have also shown that companies that participate at such events have potential to gain much more.

Trade shows provide an opportunity to meet with other professionals in the industry and establish new contacts, which can lead to valuable partnerships, collaborations, and business relationships.

For example, during last year's edition of ZITF, one of the youth-led businesses that was exhibiting under ZimTrade banner met a visitor in the same line of trade who positively impacted on their operations.

From engagements, the visitor was impressed with the products from this youth-led businesses and he was willing to support the development of the business through provision of capital equipment.

**T**he demand for Zimbabwean products has been going up in regional and international markets over the past few years.

This boost in demand comes on the back of many reasons, which include the re-engagement drive by President E.D. Mnangagwa's Government targeted at re-integrating Zimbabwean economy into global supply chains.

The effort by industry in producing quality products has also played a major role, as Zimbabwean products are often preferred when compared to what competition is offering.

For example, buyers of fresh produce in Europe prefer Zimbabwe-grown blueberries and other fresh produce, which are touted to have superior taste.

Buyers of building and construction products in regional markets such as Botswana have often described Zimbabwean products as strong and liked by end users.

There is no doubt therefore that Zimbabwean products, in terms of quality, have potential to perform well in any market across the world.

However, the quality of products is one of the many success factors that potential exporters consider, as participating in trade exhibitions will make it easy to

connect with buyers.

The Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF), just a few days away, is one of the trade exhibitions designed to improve the interface between manufacturers and distributors.

There are many more such events around the world that companies looking to improve their export market share must consider.

Trade exhibitions are organized events that allow companies to showcase and demonstrate their products and services, meet with industry partners and customers, study activities of competition, and examine recent market trends and opportunities.

Participating in trade fairs presents an opportunity to get new leads, which can translate to increased export sales.

These events enable local companies to meet prospective buyers, generate business contacts, engage in business-to-business meetings and to learn market trends so that they develop competitive products and services.

Trade exhibitions offer businesses an opportunity to showcase their products and services to a large audience, which can help to increase brand awareness and attract new customers.

The events provide some of the excellent platforms to meet potential buyers who will be concentrated in



What is exciting from the case is that the youth-led business received the equipment at an extremely competitive price and favourable payment terms.

This example shows that business-to-business engagements that take place during trade fairs can have a large contributing factor to growth of business and its exports.

By taking advantage of trade promotion activities, one can unlock new opportunities, grow operations, and maximize their business potential.

In addition, trade fairs can also provide businesses with valuable insights into industry trends, customer needs and preferences, and competitor strategies, which can inform future business decisions.

They provide space for local companies to benchmark their products with what competition is producing, change in consumer dynamics, and other market requirements.

These insights from trade fairs will allow companies to remain on top of the game.

There are also education and learning benefits from attending a trade fair.

The events often include seminars, workshops, and keynote speeches that offer insights and education on relevant topics.

For example, the Intra-Africa Trade Fair (IATF) taking place this year has already started with a series of seminars, where business leaders share insights into developing successful exporting enterprises.

Organizers of the largest trade fair in Africa have also started publishing podcasts with speakers from different parts of the continent.

These are already providing key insights into African markets, such as consumer requirements, market dynamics, creating leads in those markets, and successfully establishing networks in non-traditional markets.

Attendees can learn about new technologies, industry trends, and best practices.

## GETTING PREPARED FOR A PROMOTION EVENT

As a standard, it is determined that there is no substitute for adequate preparedness by the participants.

In short, as the old saying goes, "If you do not prepare, you are preparing to fail."

In this respect, ZimTrade assists companies to be fully prepared for trade fairs that they organise.

Firstly, companies should develop objectives for participating in the event as these will be used to measure the effectiveness of their participation.

Companies also need to develop appropriate promotional materials and graphics that will attract visitors to their stands.

Preparedness also means mobilizing potential visitors to the stand and setting up meetings, prior to the event.

Evaluation conducted by ZimTrade have shown that companies that mobilise potential buyers prior to participating at a trade exhibition have better chances of getting orders.

During the event itself, it is imperative that the booth is manned by trained staff who are competent in handling questions on all aspects of the products on show.

After the event, it is important for

participants to follow up on all leads obtained from the trade show.

Quick follow-ups increase on chances of sales as the first one to follow-up usually wins the sale.

In preparation for these trade fairs, ZimTrade has several programmes designed to assist companies to be competitive at trade exhibitions.

For example, within the Marketing and Branding for International Competitiveness (MBIC) training programme offered by ZimTrade, there are two specific modules, which are Effective Trade Fair Participation and How to Gather Competitive Intelligence.

Additionally, companies can also benefit from other interventions by ZimTrade to improve enterprise competitiveness.

Companies across all sectors have benefited from long-standing partnerships with experts from Netherlands-based PUM and SES of Germany.

To date, the experts have worked with businesses in areas such as lean manufacturing, production scheduling and product design, leading to improved factory efficiencies as a result of reduced production costs.



# next she exporter SEASON 2

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