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EXPORTS CONTINUE TO GROW

By Archford Mabuka

ZIMBABWE'S EXPORTS recorded an 8.1 percent growth in the first nine months of this year, compared to the same period last year.

Statistics released by ZimStat shows that the country's exports stood at US\$5,16 billion between January-September this year, up from US\$4,78 billion recorded during the same period last year.

On the other hand, imports increased by 5,4 percent to US\$6.67 billion, from US\$6.32 billion in 2022.

Consequently, the trade deficit for the period under review stood at US\$1,51 billion which is a decrease when compared to a deficit of US\$1,55 billion recorded during the same period in 2022.

In terms of the major drivers,

exports of manufactured or valued added products increased by 22 percent, from US\$264,9 million in 2022, to US\$324,1 million this year.

MOVERS

Statistics shows that manufactured tobacco exports increased from US\$46 million last year, to US\$73 million in 2023, representing a 60 percent growth. Further to this, exports of processed foods grew by 39 percent, thanks to the growing demand for Zimbabwe-produced products in the region and beyond.

Exports of processed foods grew to US\$85,2 million, from US\$61,2 million last year.

Major exported products in the

sector were sugar, beer made from malt, and fruit juices.

Projections are that exports from the sector will continue to grow following increased linkages between local manufacturers and buyers in the region, facilitated by ZimTrade in the recent months.

During these programmes, local companies concluded lucrative deals, which will boost export volumes when supply commences. The household electricals and furniture sector also recorded an increase, from US\$15,2 million in 2022 to US\$18,5 million in 2023, translating to 21 percent growth.

Major exported products were table, kitchen or household articles and parts thereof of iron or steel, articles for the of goods, of plastics, and refrigerators and freezers.

In addition, export growth was also

recorded in the hides and skins sector, which saw a 42 percent growth, from US\$13.6 million in 2022, to US\$19,4 million this year.

Other sectors that recorded export growth were packaging and stationery, arts and crafts, and chemicals.

Statistics show that exports of packaging and stationery increased from US\$9,9 million to US\$12,8 million, translating to 29 percent increase.

Major exports in the sector were paper and paperboard, cartons, and boxes.

Arts and crafts exports increased by 4,8 percent to US\$7.34 million in 2023, from US\$7 million in 2022. Chemicals, exports excluding pharmaceuticals and fertilisers amounted to US\$3,9 million up from US\$1,2 million.

Major exported products in the sector include sulphur of all kinds which tremendously increased from less than US\$20,000 exports in 2022 to US\$1,1 million.

Another increase was recorded in the exports of organo-sulphur compounds which increased from US\$6,000 to US\$1 million.

Although exports of manufactured and value-added products are growing, the bulk of the country's exports are primary commodities, which is not sustainable.

Minerals and alloys exports, which are the largest contributor to total exports, increased by 5.2 percent from US\$3,9 billion between January-September 2022 to US\$4,1 billion during the same period this year.

Unmanufactured tobacco exports increased from US\$512 million to US\$649 million during the period under review, representing 26 percent increase.

SHAKERS

Building and construction materials exports declined by 27 percent to US\$22,8 million between January-September this year, from US\$31.6 million in 2022.



Products that experienced a decline include exports of unglazed ceramic flags, paving, hearth or wall tiles; mosaic cubes, and worked monumental/building stone; mosaic cubes; granules, chippings.

Agricultural inputs and implements exports decreased by 6.6 percent from US\$19,9 million in 2022 to US\$17.9 million during the same period in 2023.

A decline was recorded in exports of seed maize and seeds, fruits and spores, of a kind used for sowing.

However there was an increase in the export of mineral or chemical fertilizers, potassic from no exports last year.

EXPORT MARKETS

Efforts to diversify export markets continue to pay off, with new markets gaining significant share of Zimbabwe's exports.

Exports to South African market, which is the largest export destination market for Zimbabwean products, decreased by 10.4 percent to US\$1,76 billion from US\$1,97 billion in 2022.

South Africa now accounts for 34 percent in total exports from 41 percent in 2022.

Exports to China increased from US\$473 million last year, to US\$693 million during the period under review this year.

Exports to Mozambique also recorded 85 percent increase from US\$150 million in 2022 to US\$278 million in 2023.

There has also been a huge jump in export to Canada, which recorded exports of 42 million during the period under review this year, from US\$5.6 million last year.

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CHINA DEVELOPS STRONG APPETITE FOR ZIMBABWEAN GOODS

By Kudzai Magwenzi

ZIMBABWEAN PRODUCTS are set to record increased growth to China as demand for local products is on an upward trend in the market.

The participation of Zimbabwe at the 6th China International Import Expo (CIIE), that was held in Shanghai, China from the 5-10 November exposed the demand, which is set to boost the country's exports to Asia when local companies start to meet order requirements.

The participation of Zimbabwe was led by the Office of President and Cabinet, and drew participants of local institutions and private sector players.

The Expo was running under the theme "New Era, Shared Future." This theme mirrors China's dedication to promoting global trade.

exports of manufactured or valued added products increased by 22 percent, from US\$264,9 million in 2022, to US\$324,1 million this year.

Since its inception in 2018, the CIIE has become a significant platform for promoting global trade and facilitating international cooperation.

The CIIE is organized by the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China and the Shanghai Municipal People's Government.

It is designed as a comprehensive platform to showcase products and services from around the world, promote bilateral trade, and foster economic globalization.

The expo featured various exhibition areas, including trade in food and agricultural products,

consumer goods, services, automobiles, equipment, technology, and healthcare.

Participating companies under the ZimTrade umbrella were drawn from processed foods, leather and arts and crafts and crafts sectors.

Zimbabwe's country exhibition ran under the theme "Visit, Trade and Invest" embracing all the facets of Zimbabwe's reengagement efforts. Results from engagements at the fair indicate huge potential for Zimbabwean companies to perform well in the Chinese market.

The expo has been critical in championing economic diplomatic relations with the global powerhouse, and results from the expo shows that local exhibitors also benefited from knowledge transfer, which is expected to go a long way in developing competitive Zimbabwean products.

Indigenous Zimbabwean essentials such as moringa, baobab and mongongo oil attracted traction to the Zimbabwean pavilion.

Zimbabwe's exotic leather products also attracted visitors to the stand indicative of the readiness of the market to accept value added leather products from Zimbabwe.

On display were elephant, zebra, and crocodile leather products. The arts and crafts exhibitors also took their best to market, and they were recommended to consolidate orders so that they

could gain economies of scale advantage.

The sector was also advised to improve access to the market through the use of e-commerce channels such as TaoBao.

The advent of e-commerce has given opportunities for small to medium businesses to participate and survive global value chains.

With the world's largest population, China is currently the world's second importing largest economy, having recorded US\$2,7 trillion worth of exports

for the year ending December 2022.

China's major imports include equipment, iron and steel, wood, pharmaceutical products, and cereals.

Of this import figure, Zimbabwe has grown its share to US\$1,3 billion in 2022, thanks to the economic diplomacy agenda being spearheaded by President Mnangagwa's Second Republic.

China's major imports from Zimbabwe include minerals, tobacco, iron and steel, citrus fruits, raw hides wood and cotton.





MASHAVA ARTS CLUSTER, A UNIQUE FORM WITH A GLOBAL APPEAL

By Kingston Gwatidzo (Opinion)

THERE IS a new generation of amazingly talented artists working in Zimbabwe today, mainly in urban environments.

They are exposed to modernity – technology, education, and social change.

Mashava Arts cluster in Masvingo has that generation.

The cluster, which specializes in stone sculptures, is a fusion of talented artists, with just over fifty artists, bringing together their talents to give a snippet of what Zimbabwe has to offer in terms of visual arts.

Mashava is in the Masvingo Province, about 40 kilometres south of the Great Zimbabwe, the largest stone monument in Africa after the pyramids in Egypt.

The Mashava stone sculptures are part of the Zimbabwean stone sculpture tradition, which dates to the 9th century.

Stone sculptures are one of the oldest and most diverse forms of artistic expression in human history.

They can be found in almost every culture and civilization, from ancient Egypt to modern China.

Some sculptures from Mashava arts cluster have a distinctive style and quality that set them apart from the rest and the stone sculptures from Zimbabwe are valued for their quality, design, and innovation, as well as for their cultural and historical significance.

Mashava Arts cluster artists and sculptors use various types of stone, such as serpentine, soapstone, spring stone, and opal, to carve out figures and shapes that reflect their worldview and beliefs.

The sculptures depict animals, birds, human beings, and the spirit world, and they often have a symbolic or spiritual meaning.

The sculptors hand make the stone sculptures and they rely on their intuition and imagination to create their artworks.

Mashava Arts Cluster is an investment of energy and enthusiasm into artifacts, directly creating employment and a means of earning for the local communities.

With senior artists channeling their passion, knowledge, and experience to their natural successors, continuity is guaranteed within the Cluster.

Support is offered to the budding artist, promoting talented young Zimbabwean sculptors, to raise the profile of the sculpture movement as a whole and the region of Mashava.

The Mashava stone sculptures are not only beautiful and unique but also valuable and sought-after by collectors and art lovers around the world.

They have been exhibited in various countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, at the Ambiente Trade Fair, France, and the Netherlands, and they have received international recognition and acclaim.

Currently, ZimTrade is working with the cluster to enhance their visibility and reputation, increase their sales and income, and contribute to the development and preservation of their art form and cultural identity.

Through the export development programs, the artists from the cluster have been made aware of the trends, and opportunities of

the export markets, and assisted in how they can adapt and innovate accordingly.

Through technical interventions, ZimTrade has been working with the artists to diversify both their products and markets, improve their quality and standards, and promote their unique selling points and competitive advantages.

This has led to new markets opening in the Netherlands, where more and more art galleries are seeking to carry the art pieces from the cluster.

The European Union (EU) is one of the major markets for the Mashava stone sculptures,

as well as for other natural stone and stone products.

The EU is a traditional user and consumer of natural stone and stone products, and it has the highest per capita consumption worldwide.

In 2020, the EU consumed close to US\$9 Billion worth of natural stone, of which US\$7 billion were finished stone products, such as the artifacts from Mashava.

The EU consumers are concerned about the environmental and social impacts of natural stone and stone products, and ZimTrade has been working with the artists in Mashava to adhere to the principles of sustainability and fair trade.



HARNESSING THE CONTINUED GROWTH OF VALUE-ADDED PRODUCTS

By Karen Mukwedeya (Opinion)

ZIMBABWE, A land of abundant natural resources, has long been recognized for its vast potential in the global market.

However, to fully harness this potential and achieve sustainable economic growth, it is crucial for businesses to focus on value-addition in its export sector.

By transforming raw materials into finished or semi-finished products, Zimbabwe can position itself as a competitive player in international trade.

Currently, the country is on the right trajectory of export growth with exports of value-added products increasing by 22 percent, between January-September this year.

According to ZimStat, exports of value-added products jumped from US\$264,9 million during the period under review in 2022 to US\$324,1 million in 2023.

This article explores the importance of value-addition in increasing Zimbabwe's exports, and how the country can continue this growth trajectory, drawing inspiration from successful examples of countries that have embraced this approach and key lessons that we could implement in Zimbabwe.

Under the National Export Strategy, Zimbabwe has set a target of achieving 10 percent export growth within a specified time-frame.

To accomplish this goal, it is imperative to shift the focus from exporting raw materials to value-adding.

This strategic shift will not only enhance Zimbabwe's economic standing but also create employment opportunities and foster technological advancements within the nation.

Value-addition involves the process of enhancing the quality, functionality, or aesthetics of

a product to meet international standards and customer expectations.

Value addition also enables the country to diversify its export base. As Zimbabwe, the country has high performing sectors such as agriculture and mining.

Riding on these thriving sectors, there is room to invest in value addition to accelerate trade growth.

Several countries have successfully transformed their economies by reducing exports of raw materials and prioritizing value-addition. Implementing the following strategies could assist to achieve this include:-

DIVERSIFICATION AND INDUSTRIALIZATION:

Value-addition presents an incredible opportunity for Zimbabwe to diversify its economy beyond its heavy reliance on traditional sectors such as agriculture and mining.

By investing in industries that add value to raw materials and produce finished goods, the country can reduce its vulnerability to external market fluctuations and increase its export potential.

Encouraging local manufacturing, processing, and packaging industries will not only create employment opportunities but also boost revenue generation.

ENHANCING COMPETITIVENESS:

Value-addition plays a vital role in enhancing the competitiveness of Zimbabwean products in both domestic and international markets.

By adding value to raw materials locally, the country can produce higher-quality finished goods that meet international standards.

This will enable Zimbabwean

businesses to compete effectively with imported products, leading to increased market share and export revenues.

TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION:

Investing in technology and innovation is crucial for successful value-addition in Zimbabwe.

This includes adopting modern machinery, improving production processes, and utilizing research and development capabilities.

By embracing technological advancements, businesses can improve efficiency, reduce production costs, and produce innovative products that meet changing consumer demands.

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT:

To fully maximize the benefits of value-addition, it is essential to invest in skills development programs that equip the workforce with the necessary knowledge and expertise.

Providing training and vocational education in areas such as manufacturing, processing, packaging, and quality control will empower Zimbabweans to actively participate in value-addition activities.

This will not only create employment opportunities but also ensure the sustainability of the value-added industries.

ACCESS TO FINANCE:

Access to affordable financing is crucial for promoting value-addition in Zimbabwe.

Financial institutions must develop tailored financial products and incentives that support value-addition initiatives.

This includes low-interest loans, grants, and tax incentives for businesses involved in value-added activities.



KATAMBORA SEEDS, A HIDDEN GEM FOR LIVESTOCK MARKETS

BY Gugulethu Mpofu

A CROP with export potential was recently identified during a visit to Mafuro Seeds, a youth-owned business mainly involved in the distribution of seeds for pastures and livestock.

Though these nutrient-dense legumes may be unfamiliar to you, they could help diversify Zimbabwe's agricultural exports. These are Katambora seeds. Zimbabwean farmers can take advantage of increasing global demand for plant-based protein sources by exporting Katambora seeds.

Katambora seeds, also known as cattle cake or Rhodes grass, are a drought-resistant grass species native to Zimbabwe that produces seed pods containing small seeds rich in protein.

These seeds have significant potential as a livestock feed

supplement for cattle, goats, and chickens in international markets.

The Katambora plant provides essential nutrients for cattle, pigs, and poultry.

Moreover, the seeds boast an array of minerals like phosphorus, magnesium, manganese, and zinc.

The seeds' digestible energy also helps cattle gain weight. Supplementing feed with Katambora seeds could increase cattle growth rate and milk yield.

For monogastric animals like pigs and poultry, the protein in Katambora seeds contains adequate amounts of lysine and methionine, essential amino acids that promote growth.

Katambora seeds may enhance feed conversion efficiency, daily weight gain, and quality of meat in pigs and poultry.

The nutritional benefits of Katam

bora seeds shows their potential as a valuable feed supplement for livestock.

Found throughout Zimbabwe, the drought-resistant Katambora plant produces protein-rich seeds that have long been used by local farmers to improve livestock health and boost milk production.

Now, with increasing global demand for natural, sustainable animal feed, Katambora seeds are poised to become Zimbabwe's next export success story.

If harnessed and cultivated at a commercial scale, Katambora could generate substantial income for rural farmers, encourage agricultural diversification, and position Zimbabwe as a leader in the growing market for high-quality, ecologically friendly livestock supplements.

With the potential for both economic and environmental benefits, Katambora seeds deserve recognition as one of Zimbabwe's hidden gems.

They are prized as a natural, organic feed additive and as a more affordable protein source. Due to the grass's resistance to drought, it is utilised as both lawn and animal feed in the Middle East, where market potential has been recognised.

The crop requires little irrigation or fertilizer and has few natural predators, so yields tend to be high. Katambora also fixes nitrogen in the soil, so it improves soil fertility over time.

By rotating Katambora with maize and other crops, smallholder farmers can achieve better harvests and more sustainable livelihoods. In Zimbabwe, the cultivation of Katambora seeds is well suited to smallholder farming methods in Zimbabwe.

Katambora seeds can sell for up to US\$600 per ton, providing smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe a valuable source of income.

By focusing on Katambora seed production and export, these farmers have an opportunity to tap into a niche market, gain a price premium for their crops, and achieve a more stable income.

With support to improve production and gain certifications to export Katambora seeds, smallholder farmers in Zimbabwe could build a thriving industry.

By providing a sustainable, organic feed source on global markets, Katambora seeds represent an opportunity for these farmers to improve their economic security through trade.

To tap into export markets, Zimbabwean Katambora seed producers should focus on scaling up cultivation and improving harvesting techniques to boost seed yields and quality.

Mechanization and training can help maximize production.

Additionally, if the strategy is to export the crop, it is important to be aware that an international body control seed production and thus, it is important to acquire seeds from sellers certified by relevant authorities.

By sustainably cultivating and exporting this nutritious livestock feed supplement, Zimbabwe can tap into the vast global market for animal feed ingredients and gain a foothold as a trusted supplier. With the right investments and partnerships, Katambora seeds may sprout into an agricultural export success story for Zimbabwe.





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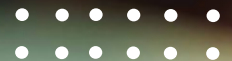
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BOUNTIFUL EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR MEAT IN AFRICA

THE AFRICAN continent remains an untapped market for Zimbabwe, presenting an array of export opportunities across all sectors. In fact, the African continent presents the quickest solutions for the country grow exports, leveraging on logistical advantages, relations, and existing trade agreements.

Writing in his column of The Sunday Mail earlier this year, President E.D Mnangagwa said Africa provides the strongest defence of Zimbabwe's interest. In explaining those interests, President Mnangagwa noted that Zimbabwe is pursuing new approaches that will unlock economic interests from its good relations with sister countries on the continent.

The economic diplomacy agenda, being implemented by the Second Republic through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, is expected to create conditions that will soften the landing for local products across the continent.

The focus on Africa is not by chance, but a deliberate strategy that is deep rooted in the realisation that the continent has lots of opportunities that are benefiting countries from other continents than its own.

The import structure alone shows that local businesses stand to benefits immensely from the African continent alone is they provide solutions to the supply problems facing the continent.

For example, Africa has a huge market for meat, and has been looking elsewhere for reliable supply.

According to Trade Map, Africa's import bill of meat and edible meat offal grew to US\$ 4,71 billion in 2022, from US\$4,47 billion the previous year.

To meet the huge gap on the continent, the largest exporters of meat and edible meat offal last year were Brazil (US\$1,44 billion), India (US\$711 million), United States of America (US\$691 million), Netherlands (US\$212 million), and Poland (US\$202 million).

Other exporters to Africa accounting for a sizable share are Spain, Belgium, South Africa, Türkiye, Germany, and United Kingdom.

Although Zimbabwe's share of the market is still small, the fact that Africa is prepared to look across the world for meat and edible meat offal must bring excitement to farmers who want to boost production of export-targeted meat.

MEAT MARKET IN AFRICA

The meat market in Africa is huge and statistics show that the continent is failing to meet its demand, as most countries are sourcing from other continents.

Currently, Egypt is Africa's largest importer of meat and edible meat offal, with frozen bovine animals constituting the largest share of the imports, around US\$1 billion.

Other top imports from the sub-sector in Egypt in 2022 were edible offal (US\$186 million), meat and edible offal of fowls (US\$90 million), fresh or chilled bovine meat (US\$21,2 million) and meat of sheep or goats (US\$10,1 million).

Figures available on Trade Map shows that imports in Egypt grew from US\$ in 2021 to US\$ in 2022. Leading supplying countries to Egypt last year were India, Brazil, United States of America (USA), Australia, Sudan, Paraguay, and Colombia.

Closer to Zimbabwe is Angola, the second largest importer of meat and meat offal importer in Africa.

According to Trade Map, the imports have been picking up in the market in the recent years, growing from US\$355,7 million in 2021 to US\$578,9 million in 2022.

Of the last year's total import bill of meat and edible meat offal in Angola, fowls specifically chickens accounted for the largest share (US\$405,5 million), followed by meat of swine (US\$76 million), edible offals (US\$50 million), and meat of bovine animals (US\$31,7 million).

In terms of the source markets, the bulk of meat imports in Angola are coming from United States of America (US\$195 million), Brazil (US\$193,8 million), and Portugal (US\$21,6 million), Netherlands (US\$21,4 million), and Poland (US\$21,3 million).

Other top importers to Angola include Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Italy, and Spain.

Considering that the Angola has a huge market for meat and are willing to source in other continents for supply, there are gaps that local exporters can utilise if they ride on advantages of distance.

Local companies can also ride on existing trade instruments, especially the SADC Trade Protocol, and the African Continental Free Trade Area.

South Africa is third Africa's largest importer, and second in southern Africa.

Figures available on Trade Map shows that South Africa's imports have been fluctuating in the recent years, recording US\$403,6 million in 2022, US\$524,3 million in 2021, and US\$426 million in 2020.

Last year, imports of meat and edible meat offal in South Africa constituted largely meat and edible offal of fowls (US\$278,7 million), edible offal of other animals (US\$ 54,5 million), and meat of swine (US\$51,7 million).



Most of the meat imports in South Africa are coming from Brazil (US\$222,8 million), USA, Argentina, Spain, United Kingdom, Australia, and Ireland.

In the SADC region, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has also been growing its imports of meat, from US\$99,1 million in 2021 to US\$109,9 million in 2022.

ZimTrade, national trade development and promotion organisation, has organised several programmes to link Zimbabwean exporters and buyers in DRC, and the interest for local products has been growing in the market. Engagements with leading buyers have shown a huge market for Zimbabwean beef in provinces such as Kinshasa, Haut-Katanga, Lualaba, and Haut-Lomami.

Currently, most imports of meat and edible meat offal in DRC are coming from Poland, Netherlands, Brazil, Belgium, Germany, and Italy.

There are buyers in DRC who are prepared to import meat from Zimbabwe, and local exporters who can supply consistently can engage ZimTrade for linkages with the leading distributors.





DEMYSTIFYING THE EXPORT PROCESS

A FEW years ago, export business was loosely translated to mean “big boys” game, and that only established businesses could successfully venture into meaningful and successful mainstream cross border trade.

However, thanks to concerted efforts by the Government, and related institutions, there has been improved engagements between local businesses and potential partners in regional and international markets.

For example, the Second Republic’s economic diplomacy agenda has resulted in increased participation of local companies and business forums, designed to strengthen business-to-business engagements.

Further to this, activities by ZimTrade – national trade development and promotion organization – has also resulted in increased interest generated amongst previously marginalized groups to venture into mainstream export business.

For example, ZimTrade’s run Eagles’ Nest Youth Export Incubation Programme has seen more than 150 youth-owned enterprises receive capacity building interventions in the last two years so that

their products and services can compete well in export markets.

The Next She Exporter programme by ZimTrade has also improved the integration of female-led enterprises, especially SMEs, in mainstream export business.

Whilst these activities are done to improve the competitiveness of local products in export markets, the overall business success across borders is also dependent on how it structures its export strategy, in light of the entire export process.

This column will explain some key export processes for consideration by companies looking to establish a presence across borders.

EXPORT PROCESS AT A GLANCE

Two key considerations in export are there has to be a product and it has to be sold in a country other than the one in which it is produced.

While the process of exporting can be intimidating and time-consuming to the novice, it is easier than most people think and is rewarding.

The process of exporting begins as soon as the company decides to venture into the export business.

The early processes include conducting market researches to identify opportunities, analyzing import trends in target markets, attending trade fairs, conferences and business seminars in target markets to organizing meetings with potential buyers.

The information gathered during these processes should be used to come up with an export marketing strategy that will give direction to the company’s export business.

The strategy should clearly define markets being targeted by geographical area and segment, market entry strategies as informed by research, market dynamics, pricing, delivery channels and the route to market.

The route to market is important as it defines how the company intends to export its products, for example, exports can be done through a distributor, agent, franchise or e-commerce.

The strategy should also identify the department that will be responsible for exports and set aside a budget to support the initiative.

TARGETING LOW HANGING MARKETS

The easiest way to kickstart an export journey for potential exporters is targeting countries in the region and those that Zimbabwe has trade agreements with. Zimbabwe is a signatory to both bilateral and multilateral trade agreements.

These agreements offer quota-free access to their markets at reduced or no tariffs on selected products which will increase the competitiveness of your products.

Locally produced products qualify for preferential treatment under the following multilateral trade agreements; SADC Trade Protocol, COMESA trade agreement, Interim Economic Partnership Agreement, UK-ESA Interim Economic Partnership Agreement and the recently inaugurated African Continental Free Trade Agreement which is still in the trial phase.

In addition to these multilateral agreements, Zimbabwe has operational bilateral agreements with Mozambique, Botswana, Malawi, and Namibia.

CONDUCTING MARKET RESEARCH

Before venturing into any export market, it is important to begin by conducting a market research, which can be either desk research, field research or a combination of both.

This will enable the potential exporter to understand several factors that can determine success or failure in export market.

During this research, there are issues that should come out clearly, such as market size, the current volumes levels (quantities), value of sales and current imports of the product or service in the targeted market.

Before selecting a market, exporters should also understand

the exchange controls of the intended export market as this will determine, how one is paid.

It is also critical to look at macro-economic indicators of the intended export market.

Issues of customs duties and value-added tax are some of the issues that the research should answer, as these will impact on the final pricing in the targeted market.

Further to this, culture and age demographics in the targeted market are important to ascertain consumption habits and local exporters need to have a comprehensive understanding of these so that they develop products and services that meet customer needs.

UNDERSTANDING MARKET REQUIREMENTS

The exporter should also be aware of the tariff and non-tariff barriers, and surcharges that are charged on the product under consideration. Tariffs are essentially costing on top of production costs that will affect the selling price.

Overlooking these issues may result in penalties and in some cases confiscation of your products. Some products are regulated by health authorities and it is essential to check the regulations that affect the importation of your product and comply with such requirements.

There are efforts to standardise some of these regulations in the region so if a product is registered locally, it will also be easier to register in foreign markets after conducting relevant tests.

Export markets are particular about packaging, labelling requirements and it is of paramount importance to check the kind of packaging required and labelling and this may entail a change in your current packaging to meet the export packaging requirements.

There is also need to consider distribution options as this is also affected by geographic proximity and nature of product to be transported.

Would be exporter should also check on trends in the use of the product targeted for export.

There is nothing that put off a potential buyer more than negotiating with a supplier who does not have enough knowledge about the product, pricing or delivery times.

MEETING ORDERS AND DOCUMENTATION

A successful export marketing expedition should result in the company getting orders for its products or services.

A standard confirmed order should include the product description, quantity, price, payment terms and delivery times and should be signed and acknowledged by the supplier.

Upon confirmation of an order, the company should start preparing for delivery according to the agreed terms.

The company should prepare a Commercial Invoice and packing list which should show the consignor (exporter) and consignee (importer) details as well as the product description, price, payment terms, packaging, exit port, freight and insurance costs. The description of the product must be identifiable on the Harmonized Systems codes to avoid delays in clearance or being fined for wrong classification of products in the receiving market. The Harmonized System, often abbreviated as HS code, is a standardized numerical method of classifying products.

It is used by customs authorities around the world to identify products when assessing duties and taxes and for gathering statistics. Not describing the product properly can attract fines by clearing authorities for wrong classification and may delay shipments.

Once a commercial invoice has been prepared, the supplier should proceed and apply for required export permits and certificates from relevant authorities.

For example, all agricultural produce requires one to be registered with the Agriculture Marketing Authority as an exporter.

As a general guide, all fresh produce require a phytosanitary certificate and an export permit when exporting from Zimbabwe.

The next stage in the export process is to apply for an exchange control approval popularly known as CD1 form.

A company should be registered as an exporter with the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe (RBZ) and have an operational Business Partner Number from ZIMRA. Registration is done through the

supplier's bank which submits the application on behalf of its clients.

Similarly, when applying for the CD1, an application together with copies of the export documents is submitted to the bank which processes the CD1 form on behalf of RBZ.

When issued with the CD1 form, the suppliers should take all the documents mentioned above and submit them to ZIMRA usually through the clearing agent for export clearance.

When your shipment has been cleared by ZIMRA, an exporter has 30 days to ship the consignment, failure of which the suppli

er is required to cancel the clearance or show proof of why the consignment has been delayed.

When the product has been shipped out, the exporter now has the responsibility to acquit the CD1 form by showing proof that the consignment has been paid for within 90 days from the date the CD1 form was issued for all other products and 30-days for horticulture products.

This is done by furnishing the bank with proof of payment which will be matched with the bill of entry. to increased productivity, improved product quality, and innovation.



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