

Editorial

Dear reader,

The Export Helpdesk team is pleased to present this second edition of our Newsletter. We have carefully listened to the readers of our first issue and decided to take on board some of the recommendations and suggestions we received from users around the world.

One of the suggestions was to present the Newsletter in other languages in view of reaching out to readers in non English speaking regions. The first edition will be soon available in Spanish and in French. Printed versions will allow distribution to the wider public.

The current November edition focuses very much on the Evaluation report and its recommendations for the future of the Export Helpdesk. We will take these recommendations very seriously and reflect how to efficiently implement them – all this with the view to render the Export Helpdesk service even more user friendly and accessible for our clients.

We would like to thank all users for their comments and suggestions which greatly contribute to make the Export Helpdesk useful and relevant to their needs.

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AFTER THREE-YEAR OPERATION, WHAT AND WHERE IS THE EXPORT HELPDESK ?

RESULTS OF THE EVALUATION OF THE EH BY ADELPHI CONSULT

In October, after a year work, the Berlin-based consulting firm, Adelphi Consult, finalised its Evaluation report of the Export Helpdesk for Developing Countries. This evaluation, initiated at the end of 2006, aimed at:

1. Evaluating the results and overall impact of the service;
2. Assessing the extent to which the information provided by the Export Helpdesk is reliable, complete, and useful, the service is user-friendly, and its availability is well-known amongst its target users;
3. Considering whether changes are desirable or necessary, and if so, to make practical suggestions about how such changes might be implemented.

In its findings, the report confirms the value of our on-line service and supports the efforts undertaken by the Directorate General for External Trade (DG TRADE) to provide a practical instrument to facilitate exports from developing countries into the European Union. It notes in particular that the Export Helpdesk is on the whole a very comprehensive source of information, and that its approach of providing this range of information systematically by product code is unique among comparable web-based tools.

Thanks to an online questionnaire directly linked to the Helpdesk website, the evaluators have been able to collect information from 778 users, who gave valuable information about their users' habits and profiles, including their geographic distribution and favoured features. Based on the results of the various surveys (both online and offline),

the evaluation concludes that for the users, the main assets of the EH are that it is comprehensive, free of charge, and systematic in its information structure, making it a highly useful service.

It highlights that the success of the Export Helpdesk is reflected in the number of hits, increasing from 1500/day in 2004, the year of its inception, to more than 7000/day this year. Our next issue of the Newsletter will report more into details on this.

The evaluation report proposes about 40 recommendations articulated around the following main axes:

- Strategic development
- Development of the one-line service
- Development of promotion and awareness-raising
- Administration and quality management

In particular, it makes many very useful and practical suggestions, that will allow to improve the user-friendliness of the website, its completeness, usefulness and up-to-dateness. DG TRADE is currently analysing all these and the more policy-oriented recommendations with the view to define a renewed strategy for the development of our service. This means that this will likely lead to some changes and improvements of our website over the next months in order to make it even more useful.

Furthermore, the evaluation report suggests enhancing our awareness-raising and promotion efforts. This means that the EH Team will set up a communication and promotion strategy for 2008 aiming at to further increasing the visibility of the

Export Helpdesk, in particular in regions of the world where its knowledge and use are still low. Therefore, initiatives will be undertaken in order to present the Export Helpdesk in major national or regional

events. To this end, our EC Delegations around the world will be a key partner in all our initiatives and activities. http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/delegations/intro/web.htm.

The importance of "local multipliers"

The evaluation underlines the importance of "local multipliers" to ensure continuous promotion of the Export helpdesk in developing countries. Indeed establishing such a local network would allow following up on promotion, in particular after a presentation is organised in a particular developing country, thereby ensuring a greater degree of sustainability.

To this effect the EH Team will engage in building on cooperation with relevant intermediaries that can increase support and impact significantly. The EC Delegations in the third countries are our obvious first multipliers, but networks should also include trade organisations with a worldwide network of offices as well as local private trade associations, to whom training could be provided.

In conclusion, this evaluation is really a benchmark in the life of the Export Helpdesk. It has allowed us to assess both its strengths and weaknesses after its three-year operation, and give us the background and impetus to build now a renewed strategy, to make it even more useful, even

more complete and most of all, even more tailor-made to the needs of our users.

For download the summary or the full report of this evaluation, please visit DG TRADE website http://ec.europa.eu/trade/issues/global/development/pr191007_en.htm.

OUR EFFORTS AND ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE THE EXPORT HELPDESK

Moldova

Last October, the Export Helpdesk team (Virginie Cossoul) participated in the EU–Moldova Trade and Investment Sub-Committee of the EU-Moldova Cooperation Committee in Chisinau, where she presented the Export Helpdesk. She also made a separate presentation of the service



to an audience of sixty Moldovan entrepreneurs.

During those events, the Export Helpdesk was introduced as an important tool to help developing countries to take better advantage of market access opportunities in the European Union. Moldova was encouraged to use this trade facilitation tool, which is highly justified insofar as the EU is the first trade partner of this country.

The presentation to Moldovan entrepreneurs was organised with the assistance of the Moldovan Investment and Export Promotion Organisation (MIEPO, www.miepo.md), with the aim to make the EH known and help the entrepreneurs to increase their export activities towards the EU. The presentation gave them a good overview of the service, showing them the variety of information that the tool is providing. Very positive feedback was received and the audience showed a high interest in using the tool.

Following these events, contact with local Chambers of Commerce and Moldovan companies has been established with the purpose of enhancing their export strategy. To this aim, promotional material has been distributed.

These presentations proved to be very successful: hits figures from Moldova are now rocketing. From 200 hits in January 2006, it went up to 600 hits in January 2007 and reached more than 2000 hits after the presentations!

Lisbon – Cooperation with the Portuguese Institute for Development Support (IPAD)

On 10 October 2007, the Export Helpdesk team (Catarina de Barros Coelho/) visited (IPAD) in Lisbon in order to present the Export Helpdesk (EH) and to explore possible collaboration between the two institutions, as well as ways to increase the promotion of our service within this Institute. IPAD is an institution that coordinates and directs cooperation and public aid to development policy, with the aim to promote the economic, social and cultural development of the recipient countries, notably the Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP) and East Timor.



http://www.ipad.mne.gov.pt/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=15&Itemid=46

The discussion was very fruitful and positive and, as a first step of cooperation, links were included on each others websites. It was also suggested to organize in Lisbon in 2008 a presentation of the EH to IPAD's partners, i.e. several foundations, civil society organisations, Portuguese government officials, etc. This would increase the visibility of the Export Helpdesk and possibly lead to new cooperation with other organisations.

Dominican Republic



At the end of October, the Export Helpdesk team (Maryse Coutsouradis, coordinator of the EH team) made two presentations of the Export Helpdesk in the Dominican Republic (Santo Domingo and Santiago) to an audience of Governments officials, trade associations and entrepreneurs.

These events had been jointly organized by the EC Delegation in the Dominican Republic (<http://www.deldom.ec.europea.eu>) and the Centre for Export and Investment of the Dominican Government (CEI-RD), in cooperation with the Direction for External Trade of Ministry of Commerce and with PROEMPRESA, the private sector support programme of the EC, who also financed the events (www.proempresa.org.do).

The objective of these presentations was to make the Export Helpdesk known in the Dominican Republic, where its current use is very low (0,03% of total use). In addition, they aimed at encouraging increasing Dominican exports towards the EU, now mostly concentrated towards the

US market. Both presentations were attended by more than 100 people, and the audience showed great interest about the EH.

The format followed for these presentations was also quite innovative. Indeed after opening remarks, a PowerPoint presentation on the Export Helpdesk was made with an on-line demonstration, followed by a practical workshop, where all participants were linked to a computer connected to the Export Helpdesk and asked to use the database immediately by performing specific researches (This "hands-on" workshop proved to be extremely useful for the audience, who could have immediate practice of the Export Helpdesk website, while being assisted by experts from the EH team.

Definitely, a format to be repeated !

Barcelona (Week of Internationalisation)

On 23 November, The EH Team (Maryse Coutsouradis) also presented the Export Helpdesk in a workshop on Market Access in the context of the Week of Internationalisation organised by COPCA, the Consortium for the Commercial Promotion of Catalonia (www.copca.cat) and the Government of Catalonia. At this occasion, the Market Access Data Base (<http://madb.europa.eu/mkaccdb2/indexPublici.htm>), hosted by the same Unit in Directorate General for External Trade of European Commission, was also explained by Martin Pilser.

This workshop was attended by about 70 participants coming from various sectors of production (textiles, services, chemical products, agro-industry, etc.), as well as from trade associations.

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