

# From head winds to TRADE WINS



## **A 90-day checklist for Trade Promotion Organizations facing global disruption.**

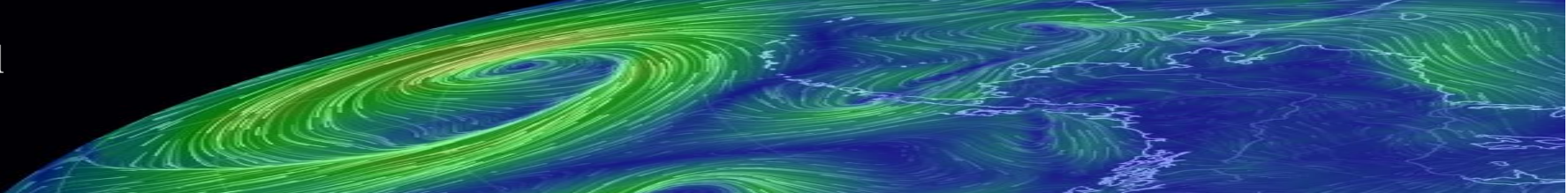
ITC research shows that when small businesses are connected to strong business support organizations, they are better able to navigate change, uncertainty and fragility. Parallel research also confirms that Trade Promotion Organizations (TPOs) are most impactful when they are forging pathways for new exports, for new sectors and into new markets. From both perspectives, TPOs succeed when they help small business deal with uncertainty and risk. To do this well, TPOs have to be better informed, more agile, and more courageous than the businesses they serve. Rather than hiding from threats, they need to embrace opportunities and be champions of change.

Heightened geopolitical tensions and tariff uncertainty are playing against a background of accelerating global megatrends, in particular digital transformation and green transition. Supply chains are being disrupted for many reasons, and new market barriers are creating both threats and opportunities. Small businesses need to pivot fast to maintain and grow their market position, and countries need to quickly diversify their market risk.

TPOs play a critical role in navigating crisis for exporters and implementing risk reduction strategies for governments. They need to be ready to step up with an organized, timely and relevant response.

*This document offers TPOs a template for a 90-day plan to activate as soon as crisis occurs. It sets out a proposed checklist for the first, second and third periods of 30 days, and incorporates 3 perspectives: business, stakeholders, ecosystem actors as well as the internal operations of the TPO. To deliver on the ambition of this plan in a time of crisis will not be easy. It will take exceptional leadership, well-established credibility and relationships, a shift in resource allocation, and a culture of customer-centricity and risk taking. In return, the immediate and effective response by a TPO in a crisis, creates competitive advantage for exporters, and builds the foundations of long-term resilience for businesses, the TPO and the global economy.*

The International Trade Centre is your partner for expertise on trade data and policy, SME competitiveness, and business support organizations.



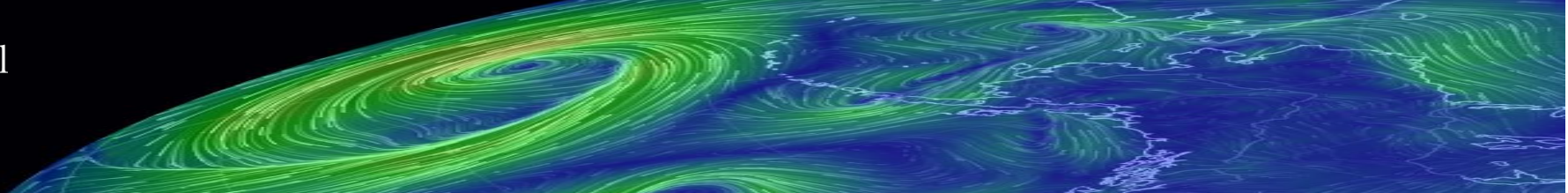
## FROM HEADWINDS TO TRADE WINS: THE 12-POINT SUMMARY and ITC solutions

	<b>TPOs and <span style="color: #00AEEF;">BUSINESSES: FAST INFORMATION AND CRISIS RESPONSE</span></b>	ITC trade data experts turn information into insights, and <a href="#">respond in real time to challenges</a> that emerge so that you can feed trusted, timely and <a href="#">relevant information</a> to help businesses take their next steps
<b>1.</b>	Collate information from reliable sources and customise it to your context	
<b>2.</b>	Share information with businesses, and gather feedback and data on their needs	
<b>3.</b>	Provide immediate low cost first response solutions at scale	
<b>4.</b>	Understand and offer solutions for both threats and opportunities	
	<b>TPOs and <span style="color: #008000;">GOVERNMENTS: INFORMATION, COORDINATION, RESOURCES</span></b>	ITCs <a href="#">range of online tools</a> to make global trade more transparent and facilitate access to markets, will help you identify export opportunities, compare market-access requirements, and monitor national trade performance. Analysis of <a href="#">SME competitiveness and fragility</a> offers integrated crisis solutions by government and TPOs
<b>5.</b>	Use business insights to inform government response	
<b>6.</b>	Co-ordinate and communicate to implement integrated government solutions	
<b>7.</b>	Mobilise resources for SME support	
	<b>TPOs and the <span style="color: #92D050;">BUSINESS SUPPORT ECOSYSTEM: SEAMLESS SOLUTIONS</span></b>	ITC specialist publications and blogs on the <a href="#">role of commercial diplomats</a> and <a href="#">business support organizations</a> during crisis will spark new thinking as you navigate your way forward.
<b>8.</b>	Check for gaps and overlaps in support, and engage with new partners	
<b>9.</b>	Co-create new solutions and seamless referrals	
<b>10.</b>	Harmonise measurement and reporting and demonstrate ecosystem impact	
	<b>TPO <span style="color: #0000FF;">OPERATIONS: AGILE RESPONSE</span></b>	ITCs <a href="#">benchmarking platform</a> supports the continuous improvement of TPOs, and can help you reconfigure your operations and build your crisis readiness and response
<b>11.</b>	Adapt existing services or reallocate resources for immediate solutions	
<b>12.</b>	Update organizational risk management, communications and KPIs	

# 1. *Understand* after 30 days: **LEARN, CONNECT, EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

## 1.1 Understand the **businesses** you serve and provide an emergency response

- Immediately send information to businesses to:
  - Describe the nature and severity of the disruption
  - Provide links to credible sources of information
  - Explain your role and priorities
  - Provide and keep updated a timeline for next steps
  - Express empathy and offer a point of contact
- Immediately engage with a focus group of exporters to:
  - Understand their current position and main concerns
  - Map out both threats and opportunities
  - Co-create and test possible solutions
  - Agree key messages from business to government
- Survey a representative sample of exporters to:
  - Gather baseline data to assess effect of the disruption
  - Understand the likely impact on different client segments
  - Gather and share examples of innovation and responsiveness
- Collate information on market shifts, threats, and opportunities to:
  - Get reliable and relevant information to current and potential customers fast
  - Reinforce your organization as a source of the truth
  - Create opportunities for regular outreach and 2-way dialogue, including with potential new customers
- Harness technology to deliver low-cost solutions fast to:
  - Offer expertise and existing solutions at scale
  - Demonstrate agility and relevance
  - Gather data on what types of interventions work best
  - Offer interim support while more targeted and customised solutions are designed and resourced



### 1.2 Engage with **stakeholders**:

- Collate unique data sets collected from exporter surveys, focus groups and other channels, analyse and share to:
  - Ensure the perspectives of the private sector are integrated into responses
  - Compare findings with other sources of information
  - Position your organization as the bridge between public and private sector
  - Provide an evidence base for advocacy
- Diversify contact points across government bodies and other stakeholders to:
  - Build channels to new types of information sources and influence
  - Contribute to development of integrated responses as an advocate for exporting businesses
  - Align with broader government and multi-stakeholder responses
- Collect information from subject matter experts to:
  - Understand possible scenarios and risks
  - Build in-house expertise
  - Collate and share expert analysis with affected businesses

### 1.3 Animate the **ecosystem**:

- Connect with existing ecosystem actors to:
  - Share data, insights and expertise
  - Understand offerings and build a referral system
  - Complement and connect solutions seamlessly
- Identify new ecosystem actors to:
  - Respond to new threats and opportunities
  - Reach new potential exporters needing support
  - Access new markets or protect existing ones
  - Access critical supply chain service providers

### 1.4 Fast reset of your **operations**:

- Review existing solutions and projects to:
  - Recognise the need for new priorities
  - Promote existing solutions for immediate help
  - Decide to adapt, increase or reduce current activities
  - Free up resources for new responses
  - Map internal sources of expertise and credibility
- Mobilise resources for emergency responses to:
  - Shift activities to reflect new priorities
  - Offer interim support while redesigning solutions
- Plan for a complete review of all aspects of your organization (see second 30 days for scope of review)

## 2. Survive after 60 days: RECONFIGURE, RESOURCE, CO-CREATE, DELIVER, MONITOR

### 2.1 Deliver to **businesses** what they need now

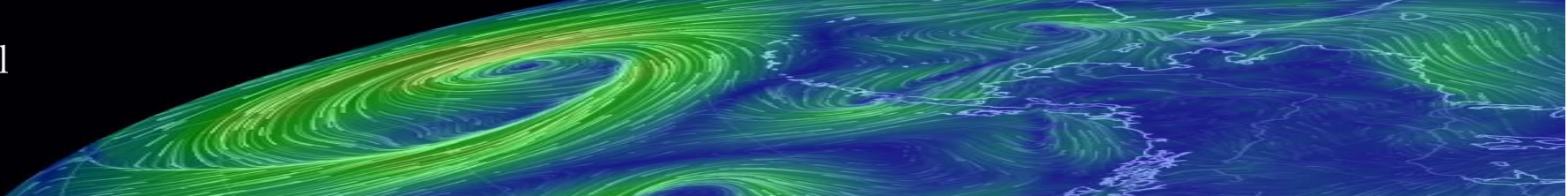
- Learn from the first 30 days to:
  - Focus and build on what works
  - Adjust customer segments for greatest impact
  - Understand conditions for success
  - Manage expectations
- Keep businesses fully informed on solutions to:
  - Reinforce role as source of information
  - Foster 2-way channels of communications
  - Ensure solutions reach those who can benefit most
  - Collect data digitally on business reactions
- Build coalitions and clusters of businesses to:
  - Create opportunities for collaboration and scale
  - Improve efficiencies in delivery of solutions
  - Customise solutions for priority groups
- Shift the perspective from threat to opportunity to:
  - Use the crisis to help businesses differentiate from competitors
  - Revisit value chains to identify opportunities
  - Share resilience success stories to create optimism
  - Nurture a country brand of business innovation and maintain contact with existing networks
  - Offer information on best alternative options

### 2.2 Co-create **stakeholder** solutions

- Share 30-day insights with government and stakeholders
  - Ensure business voices shape the agenda for action
  - Demonstrate value as a public-private sector bridge
  - Review scenarios and risk assessments
- Contribute to design of multi-agency solutions to:
  - Ensure solutions are customised for impact
  - Understand the broader context and trade offs
  - Enhance role as implementing partner
- Mobilise resources to:
  - Innovate and scale for more impact
  - Protect ongoing initiatives for long term competitiveness

### 2.3. Formalise new **ecosystem** connections

- Assess relevance of ecosystem connections after 30 days to:
  - Confirm complementarity of ecosystem solutions
  - Manage formal arrangements with partners
- Measure combined impact
  - Monitor and improve the ecosystem response
  - Promote the solutions in a harmonized fashion for shared attribution



## 2.4 Review all internal operations

- Consult internally on innovations, bottlenecks, customer feedback to:
  - Take stock of the effect and effectiveness of activities to date
  - Reinforce a culture of collaboration, feedback and innovation
  - Leverage the crisis to build ownership for organizational change
- With the new strategic context in mind review and adjust:
  - Standing agenda items for senior leadership and board
  - Risks, risk mitigation and risk appetite
  - Strategic tensions and priorities
- Considering new types of processes and resources that are needed review:
  - The need for cross cutting teams
  - Staff training, or recruitment of new expertise
  - Use of digital technologies for efficiency and consistency
  - Communications and marketing strategies, messages and channels
  - Capital investments
  - Financial situation, resource allocation and cash reserves
  - Partner and stakeholder management processes
- In light of emerging customer needs consider and adjust:
  - Customer segmentations and filtering tools
  - Customer management protocols
  - Service portfolio
  - Individual service lines and value propositions
- To demonstrate impact during the crisis, review
  - Alignment of internal and government objectives
  - Coherence of organizational indicators with strategy
  - Effect of KPIs on individual performance
  - Improved data collection, and new types of data
  - Frequency and topics of customer surveys
  - Frequency of external and internal results reporting
  - Selection of success stories

## 3. Thrive after 90 days: BALANCE, SCALE, MEASURE, IMPROVE, EMBED, CELEBRATE

### 3.1 Leave no **businesses** behind, and shape a new normal

- Review the inclusiveness of solutions to:
  - Ensure no one is left behind
  - Solutions recognise the needs of specific groups
  - Foster innovation that challenges the status quo
- Learn about overall business resilience and success to:
  - Scale new solutions and expertise for the long-term
  - Capture data on outcomes and impact
  - Celebrate achievements

### 3.2 Embed new relationships with **stakeholders** for crisis readiness and response

- Normalise crisis protocols that favour collaboration and integration to:
  - Lock in improvements in information sharing, harmonization
  - Facilitate future crisis response
- Mobilise resources collectively to:
  - Reduce the likelihood and impact of future crises
  - Deliver more impact through co-ordinated and inclusive activities

### 3.3. Deliver seamless and harmonised **ecosystem** solutions

- Review the user experience of the business support ecosystem to:
  - Check for gaps and overlaps in the service offering
  - Review coherence of customer segmentation and inclusiveness
  - Identify and connect to new ecosystem partners
  - Improve the customer experience and seamlessness of solutions
  - Demonstrate to all actors the value of connection and collaboration

### 3.4 Embed organizational changes into everyday **operations**

- Review mandate, vision, values and value proposition to:
  - Reflect a new external context
  - Leverage new levels of expertise and new partners
  - Capitalise on the trust and credibility gained
  - Reinforce a culture of agility and collaboration
- Update manuals, structures and competency frameworks to:
  - Turn temporary wins into permanent success
  - Capture knowledge into central knowledge management systems
  - Lock in new types of expertise

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## How ITC can help.

The International Trade Centre is uniquely placed as an agent of both UN and WTO. We offer [a range of online tools](#) to make global trade more transparent and facilitate access to markets. These tools will help you identify export opportunities, compare market-access requirements, monitor national trade performance, and make well-informed trade decisions.

Our trade data experts turn information into insights, and [respond in real time to challenges](#) that emerge so that you can feed trusted, timely and relevant information to help businesses take their next steps.

Our analysis of [SME competitiveness and fragility](#) offers a roadmap for integrated solutions by government and business support organizations when crisis hits

Our experts on trade promotion organizations and [our benchmarking platform](#) designed to support the continuous improvement of TPOs, can help you reconfigure your operations and build your crisis readiness.

Specialist publications and blogs on the [role of commercial diplomats](#) and [business support organizations](#) during crisis will spark new thinking as you navigate your way forward.

Find out more on our [website](#) and social media platforms

