

# POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY PAPERS (PRSPs)

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A GUIDE FOR  
EMPLOYERS' ORGANIZATIONS

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION OF EMPLOYERS

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## FOREWORD

*Business has a vital role to play in poverty reduction. Enterprises, small and large, are crucial for any country to develop its economy and a profitable, wealth-creating private sector is a pre-requisite for sustainable development.*

*It is the private sector that creates and sustains jobs and livelihoods for people. It creates the opportunities for those trapped in poverty to escape from it. This is the core contribution of business in society. This is fundamentally how the business community can respond to poverty alleviation.*

*Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) are the principal response of the international community in the development of national development strategies to fight poverty that are fully supported by the international donor community. The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are the key agencies driving PRSPs. However, other agencies including (and increasingly) the ILO are also playing a role.*

*In this respect, the representative organizations of the business community will play an essential role. It is these organizations, in their respective countries, that are central to creating the environment conducive to: attracting foreign direct investment; developing an entrepreneurial culture; and formalizing the informal economy. These are the essential ingredients that would enable more people to escape from poverty.*

*This guide has been written in response to the increasing recognition of the role that employers' organizations (EOs) can play in the PRS process. It is written exclusively for employers' organizations, which are considering engaging in their national PRSP. It is a process-oriented Guide designed to give guidance to EO's as to what PRSPs are; how the process functions; and how employers' organizations can play a role. Additionally, there are a number of illustrative examples of how tools and resources can be utilized by EO's in strengthening their lobbying efforts.*

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) were introduced by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) at the end of 1999.
- PRSP's are designed to serve as a framework for domestic policies and programmes as well as development assistance. Importantly, they are a process that aims to fit into existing initiatives and national processes as well as to avoid duplication.
- There is no single institutional PRSP model- However, certain policy commonalities are to be expected. A key element of the process is to focus on country-specific constraints to development.
- PRSPs are crucially about policy change and, in such an evolving process, the scope for employers' organizations to influence the direction it can take can be considerable.
- For many employers' organizations, the biggest obstacle to participating in the PRS process will be the lack of capacity. PRSPs are not a short-term undertaking with immediate dividends. Employers' organizations will need to determine how much of a priority participation in the PRSP is and what aspects and stages they would like to be involved in.
- For employers, it is vitally important to invest in the preparation phase as it will, in all probability, determine how successful their efforts will be.
- In order to be most effective, employers' organizations should keep the main focus on the most pressing issues that are realizable for the organization. Resources will dictate this to a large extent.
- The approach an EO takes to the PRSP will be governed by its mandate and strategic objectives. A pre-requisite for effective engagement is a well developed strategy.
- The PRSPs are an instrument that attempts to achieve multiple objectives, many of which compete and inevitably tensions can develop. The challenge is to arrive at agreed prioritization. That means, for employers' organizations, making the case strongly for the inclusion of their agenda and why that needs to be tackled as a priority.
- The central objective of the PRS process is 'poverty reduction'. Therefore, in order to be as effective as possible, employers' organizations should try and couch their policy positions in terms of the impact they will have on poverty.
- Employers' organizations can look to what is working in other jurisdictions and use these examples to make their case for reform. In making such policy proposals, employers should present them in a manner that is adapted to local needs and conditions.
- The business agenda can be a positive one and all segments of society can benefit from it. EO's should try and present advocacy efforts in terms that ordinary people can empathize with.
- In terms of the implementation, employers need to underline the importance of an action-oriented implementation phase. EO's should emphasize the fact that reforms must be prioritized with effective monitoring systems put in place to oversee the implementation of the PRSP.



## WHAT ARE PRSPs?

The World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) sponsored Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) were introduced at the end of 1999 and are designed to serve as a framework for domestic policies and programs as well as development assistance. They also provide the operational basis for concessional lending and debt relief under the heavily indebted poor country (HIPC) initiative.

The approach is based on the two pillars of country self-help and support from the international community. Importantly, they are designed to be results-orientated country-level operational frameworks.

PRSPs should measure poverty on a country basis, identify goals for reducing poverty, and create a spending and policy programme for reaching those goals. In terms of achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>1</sup>, the PRSPs can be a key strategic and implementation vehicle.

### A PRSP SHOULD HAVE<sup>2</sup> :

- **A COMPREHENSIVE POVERTY DIAGNOSTIC:** This will measure poverty nationally and/ or regionally, and will also include technical descriptions, e.g., impact on ethnicity or gender;
- **CLEARLY PRESENTED AND COSTED PRIORITIES FOR MACROECONOMIC, STRUCTURAL AND SOCIAL POLICIES:** These will be prioritized according to their importance in promoting growth and reducing poverty;
- **APPROPRIATE TARGETS AND INDICATORS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS:** A PRSP will include a Policy Matrix which is a table that summarizes the policy actions the government intends to take to achieve its goals for poverty reduction. A Matrix usually contains columns listing the policy area or sector of activity, the objectives in that area, the specific policy actions to be taken, the time-frame for execution, the government agency carrying out the action, and the method of financing it;
- **A DESCRIPTION OF THE PARTICIPATORY PROCESS THAT WAS USED.**

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<sup>1</sup> The Millennium Development Goals summarize the development goals agreed on at international conferences and World summits during the 1990s. At the end of the decade, world leaders distilled the key goals and targets into the Millennium Declaration (September 2000). The Millennium Development Goals, to be achieved between 1990 and 2015, include: halving extreme poverty and hunger; achieving universal primary education; promoting gender equality; reducing under-five mortality by two-thirds; reducing maternal mortality by three-quarters; reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB; ensuring environmental sustainability; developing a global partnership for development, with targets for aid, trade and debt relief.

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<sup>2</sup> From WB/IMF "The development of poverty reduction strategy papers: Background"

The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) aims to fit into existing initiatives and national processes and to avoid duplication. In part, the approach was designed to address long standing problems of poor donor coordination, weak country ownership of externally financed programs, and the fragmentation of governmental programs and institutions caused by multiple and often inconsistent aid delivery and management policies and procedures. While nearly all donors have agreed, in principle to align their programs with PRSPs, much remains to be done in reality to achieve this objective.

## *WHAT KIND OF PROCESS IS IT?*

There is no single institutional PRSP model. Every country is different, opportunities and challenges differ. Therefore, a key element of this process is to focus on country-specific constraints to development.

Principally, PRSPs differ from previous approaches in three key ways. First, is the emphasis on country ownership; second on increased participation; and last is the greater prominence accorded to poverty reduction in policy debates.

Each process needs to be deeply rooted in national circumstances. There are 'best practices' and positive experiences that have emerged in a number of countries which could provide useful illustrations and directions without becoming templates. Approaches, challenges and outcomes will vary hugely. Consequently, while policy lessons can be learned from other countries, generalized approaches would be unwise.

The PRSPs are a participatory framework. However, there is no 'blueprint' for engagement. Employers' organizations will not necessarily be 'invited' to participate. Their engagement will depend on existing national relationships. Private sector engagement (mainly in terms of representative organizations) within the PRS process is increasingly a standard feature but in the earlier stages in many countries it was not.

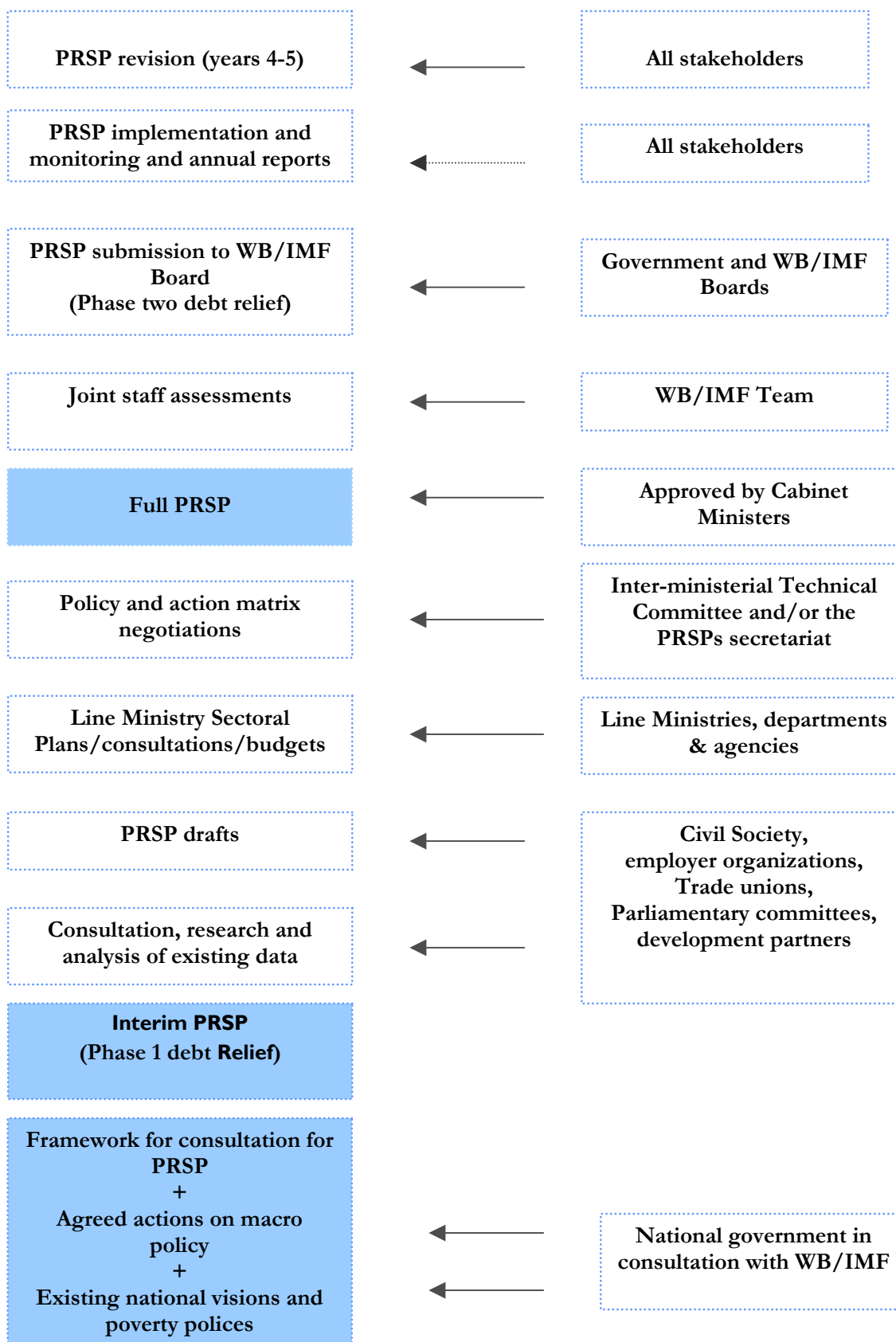
In most countries there are particular institutional arrangements for the PRS process, all of which could include employers' organization's representatives. Special committees to retain oversight (Ministerial at its highest level); technical committees; and working groups to draft and monitor the process.

Some countries are increasing the linkages between the PRS and domestic decision-making processes, such as national budgets. This is important to enable joined-up policy thinking. While governments write the actual PRSP (usually completed by the Finance Ministry) parliaments are increasingly playing a more direct role. An *Annual Progress Report* is also written up to track progress.

As stated, there is no common PRSP framework but certain policy commonalities are to be expected. These include:

- Macroeconomic and structural issues (growth and employment; the economic framework; fiscal and monetary policies; trade policy);
- Poverty status (rural/urban mix etc);
- Governance (legal, regulatory and judicial reform; civil service reform, local and municipal government reform; management of public finances);
- Human development (health, education, social protection, HIV/AIDS);
- Workplace and labour market issues (policy environment conducive to enterprise development, privatization; sectoral approaches; labour market policies and institutions);
- Infrastructure (transport, utilities etc) ;
- Country specific issues: migration; conflict and security issues; regional integration processes.

## THE PRSP CYCLE <sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Decent Work and Poverty Reduction Strategies. A reference Manual for ILO staff and constituents (2005)

## 2. PARTICIPATING IN THE PRSPs

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### *WHY SHOULD EMPLOYERS' ORGANIZATIONS ENGAGE IN PRSPs?*

In terms of national development strategies that have the full support of the international community, PRSPs are currently *the key national development process*.

Vitally important policy discussions (and changes) will take place within this framework. Lack of engagement, therefore, can entail exclusion from those discussions. All recent PRSPs included policy discussions to improve the regulatory environment in a variety of areas, such as business registration, access to credit, taxation and trade. PRSPs are crucially about policy change and, in such an evolving process, the scope for employers to influence their direction can be considerable. Importantly, for many developing countries, perhaps most, the development and implementation of broad based national poverty reduction strategies is a process of 'learning by doing'.

Additionally, the PRSP is a participatory process and different actors with different agendas participate. It is important that the collective view of business is heard and is not superseded or diluted by other actors.

The PRSP process is an opportunity to build alliances. There can be other private sector groups or business friendly organizations represented. Employers' organizations should identify likely partners and explore common synergies and strategies. Trade unions often carry out a similar exercise with like minded NGOs.

In short, the PRSP process can be an extremely important vehicle in which to pursue the national business agenda.

### *MAKING THE DECISION TO PARTICIPATE?*

For some employers' organizations, the biggest obstacle to participating in the PRS process will be lack of capacity. PRSP consultations take time and can be held in various parts of the country. Resources will be needed to organize meetings, sensitize members, carry out research and disseminate the findings to members, and prepare detailed alternatives to submit during the PRSP formulation process.

Equally important, as an attempt to devise national policy responses to poverty alleviation, PRSPs are not a short- term undertaking with immediate dividends. They take time – years not months (they average over two years). They are also not neat, succinct documents, often running to a couple of hundred pages.

Employers' organizations will need to determine how much of a priority participation in the PRSP is and what *aspects* and *stages* they would like to be involved in. Early involvement in the process is highly recommended.

Once a decision has been made to engage in the process by an employers' organization, it is vital to keep the broad membership fully on board. Consultations with members need to be sustained throughout the process. Forums and other engagement mechanisms should be held with members to make sure that they are fully appraised of developments and supportive of the same.

- ❑ Find out if your country currently has a PRSP or intends to write one.
- ❑ If the PRSP is already underway, obtain the latest draft and any other relevant information. Use existing channels of influence in government to gather as much information as possible.
- ❑ Find out what other business friendly or private sector representatives are engaged in the PRSP? What are their views, perspectives, concerns? Is there room for a collaborative approach on certain issues?
- ❑ Identify your own capacities internally. Does your organization have the capacity to participate? If not, are there other ways of making sure your organizations' perspectives can be included in the PRSP (e.g. collaborative alliances)?
- ❑ Identify the potential benefits from participation. Make the assessment on the basis of whether you think the PRSP can be a *vehicle* in helping to deliver the national business agenda.
- ❑ If your analysis is that it is important for your organization to be included in the national PRSP, prepare and present the case to your Board of Directors. Approval from your Board will be essential for sustainable engagement.

### *THE RESEARCH & PREPARATION PHASE: THE KEY TO A SUSTAINABLE APPROACH*

A pre-requisite for effective engagement is a well developed strategy. How can the PRS process fit into the organization's existing strategic objectives? What are the key objectives that the employers' organization wants from the process? What are the likely benefits? What are the trade-offs? What is achievable?

A key issue for consideration at this preparatory phase is identifying possible partners to work with. For instance, by deciding on a collaborative approach with say another business organization, research and preparatory work can be shared. Different organizations can focus on different agreed areas?

But collaboration should not be just confined to other business organizations. For instance universities or research institutions may have produced research that can be useful to you in developing your policy positions. Member companies too could play a role both in terms of the preparatory process and also in the actual PRS process.

This will require a strong preparatory phase underpinned by effective and thorough analysis of the policy and legal framework. A by-product of the preparatory phase is the production of a synthesis report, compilation of data and knowledge base. This in itself has a high value for any employers' organization.

In order to be most effective, employers' organizations should keep the main focus on the most pressing issues that are realisable for the organization. Resources will dictate this to a large

extent. For instance, cataloguing specific laws and the impact that they can have on business can be very time-consuming.

Research should be as comprehensive as possible and 'evidence based'. For instance, organizations should map out, in clear measurement terms (if possible), both the direct costs and the compliance costs of certain overly prescriptive regulation and legislation and identify the biggest opportunities for improvement. This can be done by surveying member companies; making a cost-benefit analysis of regulatory proposals; measuring red tape (i.e. the number of steps for a particular procedure such as registration of a company) and compliance costs; developing illustrative examples of the obstacles certain legislation creates (in instances, small companies could be used to make the case and have attention drawn to their potential without such obstacles).

Such mapping exercises should be detailed. For example, by tracing the origins of a law(s) this can exemplify their irrelevancy or relevancy, as the case may be. In many developing countries, some legislation has been inherited from colonial legal systems and in cases has remained unchanged over generations.

Importantly, all factors impacting on the investment environment should be considered. For instance, costs can have a time dimension, i.e., the time taken to get goods cleared through customs in physical terms and the amount of time staff need to spend dealing with officials. Such illustrative examples can be useful in presenting a case for reform.

Based on this preparation phase, employers' organizations need to develop a plan of action, including concrete reform proposals and advocacy strategies.

**It is vitally important to invest in this preparation phase as it will in all probability determine the success of future efforts.**

#### **CHECKLIST: THE RESEARCH AND PREPARATION PHASE**

- Contact relevant government authorities/World Bank-IMF-ILO country offices and notify them of your intention to engage in the PRS process.
- Request all relevant and specific information for active and full engagement (e.g. committee membership, timetables etc).
- Plan so as to make sure that you have adequate time to prepare thoroughly. *Have realistic expectations.*
- Start developing positions. Gather data and research (Useful databases and research resources are annexed to this guide).
- Establish priorities.
- Identify issues of concern that are missing from the PRSP or that are not adequately addressed.
- Start coordinating approaches with other business organizations.
- Contact ACT/EMP specialist or IOE for assistance.

The World Bank has developed a Sourcebook which is a guide to assist countries in the development and strengthening of poverty reduction strategies. This book seeks to provide guidance both on the process aspects of the PRS and on substantive aspects of poverty diagnosis and the formulation of a strategy to address poverty in its various dimensions. It is not intended to be prescriptive nor is it envisaged that any country would apply the guidelines in the entire book.

The book should be used selectively : [www.worldbank.org/prsp/](http://www.worldbank.org/prsp/)

### *HOW EMPLOYERS' ORGANIZATIONS CAN ACCESS PRSPs*

There are no hard or fast rules on who participates. It is, therefore, up to employers' organizations themselves to seek participation if they wish. Since mid-2001, the ILO has sought to engage in the PRS process at country level<sup>4</sup>. The PRS process is seen by the ILO as a way in which the social partners can, with government, influence poverty reduction at the national level. While the ILO focus has been in bringing the 'social element' into the process, the key role it can play is in terms of providing support to and strengthening the advocacy capacity of constituents.

Variations will occur between countries in the preparation of PRSPs, developing interim- PRSPs (I-PRSPs), revision of processes and, of course, the speed of the process itself. As a general guide, the 'cycle' is summarised on [page 4](#).

The three key documents are: a) the interim I-PRSP; b) the actual PRSP; and c) the revised PRSP. The production of these documents is interspersed with consultations and assessments of progress.

Interim-PRSPs are the first step. The consultation phase takes place between the I-PRSP and the full PRSP and this can be a key entry point for employers' organizations.

#### *Some challenges*

The PRSPs are an instrument that attempts multiple objectives, many of which compete and inevitably tensions can develop. The challenge is arriving at agreed prioritization. That means, for employers' organizations, making the case strongly for the inclusion of *their* agenda and why that needs to be tackled as a priority.

The multiplicity of strategies and demands on countries by different donors and international agencies as well as domestic political actors can be onerous.

Resource constraints often mean that ambitions have to be realistic. Often there can be a mismatch between policy aims and financial realities, which can result in interventions having to be scaled down so as to avoid any financial gaps. Another problem can be a lack of focus, which can be a consequence of the difficult trade-offs countries have to make in preparing a PRSP.

<sup>4</sup> That engagement is now being increased at the request of the ILO Governing Body in November 2004.

There can be drawbacks in the consultation process. For instance, this period can turn into a 'grievance-venting process'. While such grievances can often be accurate depictions of the situation the business community faces, genuine progress will be best realizable by proactive engagement in terms of possible solutions.

Trade union engagement in the PRS process has, on occasion, proven difficult, particularly when it comes to issues such as changes to the labour code or increased labour market flexibility. In this respect, trade unions have often proven to be reluctant to even enter into negotiations, even if they are cognisant that the Labour Code has limited coverage, for fear that they will emerge with a much weakened position through such a process.

There is a role for employers' organizations, perhaps in concert with the ILO and perhaps through traditional national tripartite mechanisms, in developing thinking in this difficult area. This perhaps could be done by creating a parallel process to specifically discuss labour policy and legislation. Once progress has been made and, importantly, trust and confidence built up, this could then feed into the full PRSP.



### 3. DESIGNING A STRATEGY

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Employers' organizations have different mandates. Some are charged solely with social and labour affairs, others have a broader remit, incorporating economic and trade policies. Increasingly, many employers' organizations are broadening activities into wider policy areas, more so as these overlap. The approach to the organization's engagement in the PRSP will, therefore, be governed by its mandate and its strategic objectives. That said, there can be some generalized approaches that all employers organizations could take. It is fair to say that advocating policies that aim to develop a business environment conducive to enterprise development and expansion are common to *all* employers organizations.

For many countries which are drawing up a PRSP, the legislative and regulatory environment for business is far from ideal. Regulatory regimes often are overly restrictive, property rights are insecure, and access to judicial and contract enforcement mechanisms are limited. In these areas, employers' organizations can use the PRSP as a vehicle in trying to achieve some positive outcomes for business (comparative data can be particularly useful in lobbying efforts and annexed to this guide are a number of sources to assist EO's in advocacy efforts).

There is an emphasis in this guide on the impact a better regulatory environment can have in terms of employment generation and, as a consequence, poverty reduction. It is an obvious area and one that many employers' organizations will focus on. However, it is important to underline that it is not the only area for engagement by employers' organizations. There are many other areas they may wish to focus on. For instance, these could include: *Occupational Health and Safety issues (creating a safe and productive environment); working with others in developing practical, workable social security schemes, Health care (the role of employers' organizations in tackling HIV/AIDS in the workplace); education and training etc.*

The shape of the employers' organization's engagement will be governed by its capacities, strategic objectives and its analysis of what is achievable.

#### ***POVERTY & JOB CREATION: MAKING THE CONNECTION***

The PRSPs are a process about 'poverty reduction'. *This is the central objective of the process.* Therefore, in order to be as effective as possible, employers' organizations should try and couch their policy positions in terms of the impact they will have on poverty. This is not an easy proposition and can be difficult to do in direct and measurable ways. It is a key challenge in EO's engagement in the PRSPs.

Employers' organizations, to be as effective as possible, will need to argue the case that a better environment for business is going to result in poverty reduction and to be able to demonstrate the specific connection. For instance, is this done through more competitive businesses creating jobs for the unemployed or does it involve making it easier for the unemployed to start their own businesses, or both?

In explicitly make the connection between the employers' proposals and poverty reduction, the following can be a useful starting point. Central to the problem of poverty is the availability of work. The private sector creates and sustains jobs and creates livelihoods for people as well as creates the opportunities for those trapped in poverty to escape from it. This is the core contribution of business to society and how the business community can respond to poverty alleviation. This is the key message employers can bring to the PRS process.

The challenge is in demonstrating the direct link between the policy proposals put forward by the business community and the impact that they will have on actual poverty reduction. For example, poor people are often struggling entrepreneurs in micro enterprises. By providing them with the environment and the tools to thrive (such as access to credit, property rights etc) their latent potential can be released.

A useful way in showing the demonstrable link between the business agenda and poverty reduction can be done through illustrative examples: In advocating for increased investment in infrastructure, a proposal can be couched in terms of a wider benefit (i.e. constructing rural roads can help industry get goods to ports for export, but has also proven to raise levels of school enrolment, as it has made it easier to get children to school).

Poverty can be exacerbated by the lack of essential public services. If governments are not providing essential services, the private sector can step in. Employers' organizations can advocate for the creation of Public- Private Partnerships (PPP), which simultaneously create employment and improve services at the same time.

### **EMPLOYERS' ORGANIZATION POLICY PROPOSAL: PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS**

**PRESENTING THE CASE:** A public-private partnership (PPP) was developed in Dar es Salaam which mobilised unemployed people to collect and, where possible, recycle the waste. The waste collection is franchised to local collectors who bid for the franchise from the municipal council (52 franchises are now operating in this example). The group that wins a franchise has the right to collect waste in a particular part of the city and is paid directly by households. This reduces the waste management costs for cash-strapped municipal councils and ensures good service as collectors have a direct payment relationship with residents.

**Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, ILO working with UNDP**

Often it is a question of the presentation of a proposal. For instance, in advocating policies to improve productivity and national competitiveness, the argument needs to be made that low productivity, a characteristic of many micro and small enterprises, limits wages and income and reduces the overall viability of an enterprise. Policies to improve productivity can, therefore, impact on both.

Employers' organizations are always looking to develop and expand their membership base, so as to be as representative as possible, which increases their ability to influence government policy. This core function of an employers' organization can directly be linked to poverty alleviation strategies. For instance, broader issues related to what poverty is, include lack of 'voice and representation'. Poor people are often struggling entrepreneurs in micro enterprises. Employers' organizations can look to bring into their representative organisations, micro and small businesses and, therefore, give them both *representation* and *voice* within the organization<sup>5</sup>.

Business needs to be careful in how its key policy proposals are presented. If the perception amongst other actors in the process is that employers are simply interested in deregulation, then they might see business engagement as one-dimensional and that might 'turn them off' the employers' organization's involvement.

In putting together a specific policy proposal for the PRSP, the EO should be drawing on its existing work, which should be capable of being used beyond the PRSP for other advocacy work. Additionally, re-packaging existing proposals should look specifically formulated for the PRS process in order to be as effective as possible. This will be challenging and, in cases, simply not possible.

## MEASURING THE IMPACT

In advocating for a conducive business environment, employers' organizations should look to demonstrate the 'breadth' of the impact of their proposals (e.g. by changing policy X, a much greater number of enterprises can benefit).

However, the challenge is to be able to identify, as accurately as possible, the impact that a certain policy change has had – rather than other influencing factors. Empirically speaking, this kind of measurement and impact analysis can be difficult. *Are increases in employment, and by consequence poverty reduction, due to improvements to the regulatory changes or to other factors?* For employers' organizations to undertake a measurement and impact analysis assessment may not be possible. The best approach may be, as part of the overall policy proposal, to call on international agencies to carry out this role.

Solutions to problems can, in cases, be straightforward with immediate measurable impact. Take the following example of education spending in Uganda where the Ministry of Education realised that much of its increased spending on education was being stolen by corrupt district bureaucrats. The solution was to make public announcements of financial transfers to districts in newspapers and on the radio so that the parents in each district were fully aware of how much schools in each district should be receiving. The results were dramatic, with the share of schools receiving nothing plummeting from almost 70% to less than 10%.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> "The IOE-ILO SME development toolkit for employers" gives a number of case studies of how this is done and provides tools to implement such a strategy

<sup>6</sup> Sebastian Mallaby *The World's Banker*

## *DECIDING THE APPROACH TO TAKE*

Within the planning phase, decisions need to be made on what type of approach to take. Should a wide approach be pursued or a more targeted approach? These decisions will, to a large extent, depend on resources; existing relationships; the nature of the national PRSP; the EO's mandate; and finally, its assessment of what is realisable.

This latter point is worth emphasizing. Employers' organizations need to be realistic in the targets they set themselves and, where possible, look to work with other business-friendly actors. This latter point is extremely important, not least in terms of preparation of the policy positions, which will take time and resources.

In taking a broad approach, care needs to be taken that it does not become too broad as to be ineffective. While a more focused approach has the disadvantage of perhaps not fully maximising the opportunity to press for broad policy change on a wide sectoral basis, it can be very useful in detailing particular examples of where policy or regulatory change is needed, for example, in one specific sector. This method, once successful, could then be replicated in other sectors. This approach should be considered by those organizations with limited resources.

### **INDONESIA: BROADENING THE AGENDA**

The Indonesian national employers' organization (APINDO), after assessing possible research areas in preparation for their engagement in the PRS process, decided to broaden their traditional labour focus to include trade-related issues on their agenda.

A move towards decentralisation in the country has facilitated the emergence of tariff and non-tariff barriers to inter-provincial trade. This development is hampering the expansion of the internal market on which most small- and medium- sized enterprises depend.

Aware of this worrying trend, APINDO has taken the lead in documenting the negative effects of these new regulations and raising the awareness of the national government and other key stakeholders to ensure proper remedial action.

The conclusions of their study as well as the recommendations were presented in a PRS workshop to representatives from different institutions, including parliament, economic and social Ministries, the central bank and other private sector associations.

A list of areas for policy reform, including domestic trade, was agreed by all participants and appropriate responsibilities were assigned to different leading institutions. On trade issues, APINDO will collaborate closely with the Chamber of Commerce (KADIN), with which it has developed a constructive relationship.

## SOME CHALLENGES IN DEVELOPING A STRATEGY

In a number of cases, employers' organizations have been reluctant to engage in the process for reasons such as the limitation on resources and the inability to see immediate returns (trade unions cite the same reasons).

Some employers' organizations have decided not to engage in the PRSP process, citing fears that the participatory nature is 'broad' rather than 'deep' (in terms of meaningful engagement). This can be a valid criticism, although one made more by trade unions and NGOs rather than by the business community. The important factor to remember is that the PRS is not institutionally fixed and scope for change, if there is dissatisfaction, should be permissible. The best way of ensuring a 'deep' role for business (and proving its value) is by entering the process with well researched arguments and with practical and realizable goals.

There is often resistance to certain reforms from those that benefit from the status quo. This can entail challenges and conflicts within the existing employers' organization's membership which, while difficult, are surmountable by keeping a focus on the *overall* interests of the business community and the aggregate benefits that can accrue from the reform.

Consequently, for employers' organizations, the decision to get involved in the PRS process needs careful analysis. Member companies need to be fully supportive of the undertaking and be fully aware of the commitment and the investment that this requires. They need to see clearly the objectives of the organization and the steps that need to be taken to achieve them. For most employers' organizations, in particular those in developing countries, resources, both financial and human, are limited. A proper analysis needs to be carried out of the likely benefits from participation, bearing in mind that these will usually be realized in the medium to longer term.

### CHECKLIST: DESIGNING A STRATEGY

- Decide the type of approach (wide or targeted) that is appropriate for your organization.
- Define realistic objectives that fit into your overall mission and mandate.
- Identify potential partners and allies.
- Ensure that your proposals contribute to the twin objectives of private sector development and poverty alleviation. *Make the connection between job creation and poverty reduction.*
- Consider the resource implications of a meaningful engagement.
- Make sure your membership is aware and supportive of these undertakings.



## 4. IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

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### *MAXIMISING ADVOCACY EFFORTS*

Employers' organizations can look to what is working in other jurisdictions and use these examples to make their case for reform. In making such policy proposals, employers should present them in a manner that is adapted to local needs and conditions. The transplantation of policy and regulatory approaches from one country to another in a blanket fashion should be avoided.

Policy proposals need to be advocated in terms of their total impact and other ancillary factors interlinked to the policy proposal.

Advocacy efforts need to be nuanced. Blind calls for deregulation can alienate other partners in the process and, in cases, can be detrimental to the business agenda. Sound regulation has a key role in addressing market failures, and in terms of property rights *more* regulation is often needed not less.

Many of the poorest countries are those with the most difficult conditions for business. They often remain the ones that have reformed the least. The countries that need entrepreneurs to create jobs and boost growth often place the most obstacles in front of them. With burdensome entry regulations, fewer business bother to register. All top-performing economies regulate but they mostly do it in a less costly and burdensome way. Illustrative examples can be useful in highlighting the case.

#### **EMPLOYERS' ORGANIZATION POLICY PROPOSAL: SIMPLIFYING BUSINESS REGISTRATION PROCEDURES**

**PRESENTING THE CASE:** If Australia needs only 2 procedures to start a business, why are 15 needed in Bolivia and 19 in Chad? If it takes only one procedure to register property in Norway, why are 16 needed in Algeria?

**World Bank: Doing Business in 2005**

Try and identify inconsistencies in policies or regulations you are looking to reform. For example, often micro and small enterprises are neither completely formal nor completely informal – some comply with regulations (chiefly tax) while evading or avoiding others (due to lack of enforcement). Useful questions can emerge from this. Why are governments efficient in ensuring tax legislation and collection but not in enabling that same entity to access finance for further investment?

Often misconceptions can be hard to shift and can become established as ‘facts’ .For instance, in recent times, reform efforts in many developing countries have concentrated on simplifying business entry and establishing or improving credit information systems. This and other ancillary reforms can be presented as being ‘at the expense of social outcomes’. But in reality, the case can be made that heavier business regulation is simply not associated empirically with better social outcomes. For example, those economies (such as Finland and Norway)with the most conducive business environments also are among those with the best rights for workers, proving that there does not have to be a trade off between the two.

A coherent and effective business voice is essential to effect policy change. An important component of a successful approach, therefore, is developing and strengthening the national business voice. By strengthening and building a stronger national business voice, this can enable the employers’ organizations to play a more effective role in policy discussions and advocate for changes in the business environment that are conducive to enterprise development, for example, by identifying emasculating legislation and rent seeking bureaucracy. A number of avenues can be explored in this regard, such as alliance building between organizations. *Business needs to speak with as coherent and unified a voice as possible.*

#### **CHECKLIST: IMPLEMENTATION**

- ❑ Make sure that you understand fully the procedures and processes.
- ❑ Continually evaluate the effectiveness of your positions and their resonance with the other actors engaged in the process.
- ❑ Develop a mechanism to keep your Board (and wider membership) informed of progress throughout the PRS process.
- ❑ Follow-up on any calls for more information on your policy positions (hold bilateral consultations when necessary).
- ❑ Seek IMF/WB/IOE/ILO help if you have problems or questions arising from your government’s attitude to private sector engagement.
- ❑ Keep IOE/ACTEMP contacts updated on progress.

### *PROMOTING THE BUSINESS AGENDA*

The business agenda can be a positive one and *all* segments of society can benefit from it: Enterprises (big and small; formal and informal), through increased capacity and opportunities; the employers’ organizations through a strengthened national presence; national government by the generation of additional wealth incurred by a better investment climate; workers through improved employment options; and, importantly, the wider public, by raising the profile of an agenda aimed at eliminating rent seeking bureaucracy and administration, identifying corrupt practices and scope for such.

Try and present advocacy efforts in terms that ordinary people can empathize with. For example, if you have identified registering a business as a key area in need of reform, it could be useful to present the case in terms of the impact the current legislation has on a micro entrepreneur.

Often ordinary people can be faced with the same constraints that business faces – harassment from officials, bribery, corruption and unnecessary and emasculating bureaucracy. Getting public support of the business agenda is realizable. Surveys of the wider public on specific issues can be used to emphasize this point. Arguments can then be placed in terms of the impact laws have on ordinary people. Furthermore, if companies could spend less time and resources dealing with bureaucracy and more energy on their core mission – producing goods and services – ultimately this too will benefit the end consumer.

A good investment climate encourages higher productivity by providing opportunities and incentives for firms to develop, adapt and adopt better ways of doing things, not just innovations of the kind that might require a patent, but also better ways to organize a production process, distribute goods, and respond to consumers.

Governments have a clear monetary incentive to support the business agenda and will directly gain from less administrative regulation. Officials could spend less time and resources chasing and implementing ineffective regulation and more time and resources, human and financial, on more needy social services. Government revenue savings can be considerable. By some estimates, reducing red tape by a moderate 15% can result in savings amounting to between 1.2% and 1.8% of total government expenditure<sup>7</sup>. The case can often best be made in a holistic fashion and illustrative examples again can be useful.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

EO's need to underline the fact that reforms must be prioritized. At a national level, indicators related to industry are often done in terms of aggregate gains, such as the growth rate of manufacturing's contribution to GDP and of manufacturing employment. Employers' organizations need to underscore that *Tangible* targets and goals need to be explicitly identified and that progress should be measured throughout.

### BENCHMARKING PROGRESS

The progress of each national PRSP can be charted:

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPRS1/Resources/boardlist.pdf>

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<sup>7</sup> 'World Development Report 2005' World Bank

Effective monitoring systems should be put in place to oversee the rollout and the commitments made during the PRS process. For example, while an increasing number of countries have undertaken a good analysis of the sources of growth and the barriers to growth, this is often not linked explicitly to the choice of actions and reforms. Employers' organizations can play a valuable role in acting as a 'score keeper'.

A balance between aspirations and resource constraints needs to be maintained. There is a need for realism in setting goals and targets as well as managing expectations. Employers' organizations have a role in keeping governments realistic in the first instance (a number of recent PRSPs tended to be overly optimistic about growth)<sup>8</sup>. Policy reforms and regulatory changes subsequently should be mapped and analyzed in terms of their effectiveness. It is important to keep the focus on the business agenda. There are some cases of government priorities being diverted by the supply of donor funding rather than based on existing priorities. This point should be made to donor agencies.

There should be a proper analysis of where policies are working and where they are not. It is vital that decisions are based on sound empirical evidence. An important part of this process is in making it sustainable, i.e., making the changes stick. Registering property has enormous potential but it needs to be accompanied by improvements in the land registry, collateral registry and the courts. Additionally, if the formal cost of selling a property remains high, titles will lapse back into informality.

EO's could pressurise governments within the PRS process to commit to establishing permanent mechanisms or strengthening existing ones, to assess the impact of legislation and possible future legislation on business.

National Action Plans could be devised with review mechanisms built into the process to monitor effective implementation (task forces of experts in particular fields could be set up to examine specific policy objectives and areas). Part of this could include agreed National Declarations on policy approaches, devised and signed by the mainstream political parties and the social partners, which could then be used as a framework.

Effective and legitimate governance require two-way communication between decision-making institutions and stakeholders. Mechanisms for information flow and communication, including surveys, meetings, interactive websites etc. could be strengthened as part of the implementation process. However, if new mechanisms for dialogue are created, then they need to be genuinely effective.

The most essential component of the PRSPs should be the clear establishment of benchmarks and indicators to review the implementation of agreed policy changes. Broad rhetorical commitments by government to policy change are not enough. Concrete, time-bound and transparent commitments are essential in tracking and evaluating the impact of policy changes. Employers' organizations should utilize concrete examples where possible.

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<sup>8</sup> World Bank/IMF "PRSPs...Progress in implementation" September 2004

## MEASURING IMPLEMENTATION: COMMITMENT TO REFORM REGULATIONS COVERING FREIGHT TRANSPORT

**PRESENTING THE CASE:** Using the specific examples of the cost and time to ship freight from country X to country Y through country X's principal port. The indicators that could be used to measure progress could include: changes/simplification to custom regulations; infrastructure improvements; de-regulated transport options; and reduced bureaucratic steps.<sup>9</sup>

While policy changes need to be formulated in an understandable fashion, a key service employers' organizations can provide is interpreting new laws (and/or legislative changes) for members. For example, employers' organizations could advocate for the establishment of 'regional business centres' to disseminate information on the business climate in the different countries. These could be run by development agencies – in partnership with employers organizations. This can greatly assist 'comparative lobbying', which can be particularly effective and introduce peer review mechanisms.

### CHECKLIST: EVALUATION

- If there are policy elements of the PRSP that you are particularly dissatisfied with, develop a mechanism to monitor and report on their implementation. Develop a case for change, if necessary.
- Make sure that mechanisms, i.e., benchmarks and indicators, are put in place to ensure the implementation of agreed policy changes.
- Ascertain whether existing tripartite/bipartite bodies would be useful mechanisms to monitor the implementation of PRSP commitments.
- Assess whether your organization could be involved in the implementation of the loan programmes and policies.
- Try and ensure that any concerns you have are included in the Annual Report.
- If your concerns are not adequately reflected in the final PRSP or you have a problem with the way the process was managed, alert WB/IMF/ILO/IOE before its submission. Provide evidence of your dissatisfaction.
- Try and get a copy of the final PRSP before it is submitted to WB/IMF for endorsement.
- Do a cost-benefit analysis. *Was your participation effective? Did you attain many of your goals? If not, why?*

<sup>9</sup> World Development Report 2005' World Bank



## ANNEX: SOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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*This section outlines a number of sources, such as tools and surveys that could assist employers' organizations in their engagement in their national PRSP.*

### MEASURING THE COST OF DOING BUSINESS

The World Bank *'Doing Business Database'* provides indicators of the cost of doing business by identifying specific regulations that enhance or constrain business investment, productivity, and growth. The data set covers 155 countries. The indicators are organized into seven categories<sup>10</sup>.

#### INDICATOR 1: STARTING A BUSINESS

This survey counts all procedures required to register a firm. The following indicators are used: *Number of procedures; Average time spent during each procedure ( the number of calendar days); Official cost of each procedure ( the percentage of income per capita); Paid-up minimum capital( the percentage of income per capita)*

#### INDICATOR 2: HIRING AND FIRING WORKERS

This survey assesses the flexibility/rigidity of the labour laws. The following indicators are used: *Rigidity of Employment index(the average of three sub-indices: difficulty of hiring index, rigidity of hours index, difficulty of firing index); Cost of Firing indicator (expressed in weeks of weekly wages).*

#### INDICATOR 3: REGISTERING PROPERTY

This survey measures the ease/difficulty of registering property. The following indicators are used: *Number of procedures; Time number of calendar days); Official costs ( the percentage of the property value).*

#### INDICATOR 4: GETTING CREDIT

This database covers two sets of issues, i.e., credit information registries<sup>11</sup> and the effectiveness of collateral and bankruptcy laws in facilitating lending. The following indicators are used: *Cost to create and register collateral( the percentage of income per capita); Index of legal rights of borrowers and lenders; Index of credit information availability; Coverage of public registries(number of individuals and/or firms that have a record in the registry, scaled to the adult population size); Coverage of private bureaus (number of individuals and/or firms that have a record in the bureau, scaled to the adult population size).*

#### INDICATOR 5: PROTECTING INVESTORS

A disclosure of ownership index is available, based on the following measures: *Information on family; indirect ownership; beneficial ownership; voting agreements between shareholders; audits of financial data; ownership; financial information.*

#### INDICATOR 6: ENFORCING A CONTRACT

This survey measures contract enforcement. The following indicators are used: *Number of procedures; Time ( number of calendar days); Official costs( the percentage of the debt value).*

#### INDICATOR 7: CLOSING A BUSINESS

This survey covers the step-by-step procedures on filing for bankruptcy. The following indicators are used: *Time number of years); Cost ( the percentage of the estate); Recovery rate (cents on the dollar).*

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<sup>10</sup> Two new topics will feature in **Doing Business 2006**: trade logistics (costs of transport, certification procedures etc) and corporate taxation (its level, structure and administration).

<sup>11</sup> Credit registries are institutions/firms that gather and disseminate information on credit histories, which helps creditors assess risk and allocate credit more efficiently

## HOW TO USE IT:

A snapshot of the business climate in a given country can be immediately generated that identifies specific regulations and policies that encourage or discourage investment, productivity, and growth. The business climate of that country can then be compared with any of the other 155 countries surveyed (by each indicator). For instance, take the *'duration of days to open a new business'* indicator, a quick analysis will reveal that it takes 2 days in the best ranking country and 203 days in the worst. All the data is available online: <http://www.doingbusiness.org/>

The principal data collection methods for the indicators are the study of the existing laws and regulations in each economy; targeted interviews with regulators or private sector professionals in each topic; and cooperative arrangements with other departments of the World Bank, other donor agencies, private consulting firms, business and law associations. To be as effective as possible in lobbying for policy change, employers' organization will need this raw data, which is available to IOE federations. Contact the World Bank Country Office directly. If you experience any difficulties, contact the IOE.

## HOW TO MAKE INVESTMENT CLIMATE CROSS-COUNTRY COMPARISONS

**The World Bank Investment Climate Survey** database contains data on the investment climate in 51 countries, based on surveys of more than 27,000 firms. The surveys measure entrepreneurs' perceptions of the investment climate in their country and provide indicators of firm productivity and performance. The surveys cover the following areas:

- government policies and services,
- quality and provision of physical infrastructure,
- structure and function of labour, capital and product markets,
- inter-business relations and networking,
- contract enforcement,
- effectiveness of regulations,
- tax and customs regulation,
- law and order, and other aspects of governance.

## HOW TO USE IT:

The surveys will give cross-country comparisons for each indicator listed (above). For the largest possible dataset, a comparison of all countries is possible (the indicators are broken into groups). Select the group that you want displayed in the table.

For example, the database can tell you that 67.2% of firms identify corruption as a major or very severe obstacle to business operation and growth (the highest ranking country) compared to 2.7% in the lowest ranking country. More specific comparisons are also available, such as the collateral needed for a loan (% of loan) or the number of days needed to clear a check (1.1 days is the lowest with 14.3 days the most in the sample of countries used). All data is available on-line:

<http://rru.worldbank.org/investmentclimate/>

The Bank also produces Investment Climate Assessments for a limited (but expanding) group of countries. These assessments are comprehensive country reports that draw upon the results of Investment Climate Surveys and other tools.

<http://www.ifc.org/ifcext/economics.nsf/Content/IC-InvestmentClimateAssessments>

## MEASURING NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

**The World Economic Forum** produces a number of reports that identify impediments to growth and national economic progress. Its flagship report is **The Global Competitiveness Report (GCR)**. The WEF also produces regional and topical reports such as the Africa Competitiveness Report and The Global Information Technology Report. The Global Competitiveness Report is a comparative study that assesses the competitiveness of over 100 economies and ranks them accordingly. The report combines publicly available data along with survey data of perceptions and observations of business leaders in a given country.

<http://www.weforum.org/site/homepublic.nsf/Content/Global+Competitiveness+Programme%5CGlobal+Competitiveness+Report>

### HOW TO USE IT:

The Global Competitiveness Report (GCR) analyzes competitiveness through two indexes: a) Growth Competitiveness Index (GCI); and b) Business Competitiveness Index (BCI). The two indexes combine available hard data and data from the businesses surveys.

The GCI is based on three broad categories: a) the macroeconomic environment; b) the quality of public institutions; c) technology. Measurements can be made against all three indexes. Shifts over time can also be tracked, for example, tracking how many years a country is running a budget surplus or whether its public institutions have remained stable.

The Business Competitiveness Index (BCI) evaluates the underlying microeconomic conditions defining the current sustainable level of productivity in the countries surveyed. The microeconomic foundations of productivity rest on two interrelated areas: (1) the sophistication with which domestic companies or foreign subsidiaries operating in the country compete, and (2) the quality of the microeconomic business environment in which they operate. The productivity of a country is ultimately set by the productivity of its companies.

Overall Competitiveness: Country Rankings 2004-2005: 1) Finland; 2) USA; 3) Sweden; 4) Taiwan; 5) Denmark; 6) Norway; 7) Singapore; 8) Switzerland; 9) Japan; 10) Iceland.

## MEASURING CORRUPTION

*The Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index* (CPI) ranks countries in terms of the degree to which corruption is perceived to exist among public officials and politicians. It is a composite index, drawing on corruption-related data in expert surveys carried out by a variety of reputable institutions. It reflects the views of businesspeople and analysts from around the world, including experts who are locals in the countries evaluated. The CPI 2004 ranks 146 countries. <http://www.transparency.org/cpi/2004/cpi2004.en.html#cpi2004>

### TI CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX 2004

Country Rank	Country	2004 CPI Score*	Confidence Range**	Surveys Used***
1	Finland	9,7	9.5 - 9.8	9
2	New Zealand	9,6	9.4 - 9.6	9
3	Denmark	9,5	9.3 - 9.7	10
4	Iceland	9,5	9.4 - 9.7	8
5	Singapore	9,3	9.2 - 9.4	13
6	Sweden	9,2	9.1 - 9.3	11
7	Switzerland	9,1	8.9 - 9.2	10
8	Norway	8,9	8.6 - 9.1	9
9	Australia	8,8	8.4 - 9.1	15
10	Netherlands	8,7	8.5 - 8.9	10

### ANALYSING LABOUR MARKET DATA & INDICATORS

The International Labour Organization's (ILO) **Key Indicators of the Labour Market** (KILM) provides data on the key elements of the world's labour markets. The KILM is designed with two objectives in mind: (a) to present a core set of labour market indicators; and (b) to improve the availability of the indicators to monitor new employment trends. It can be a useful resource in making a comparative analysis.

## THERE ARE 20 KILM INDICATORS:

Labour force participation rate; Unemployment by educational attainment; Employment-to-population ratio; Time-related underemployment; Status in employment; Inactivity rate; Employment by sector; Educational attainment and illiteracy; Part-time workers; Manufacturing wage indices; Hours of work; Occupational wage indices; Employment in the informal economy; Hourly compensation costs; Unemployment; Labour productivity and unit labour costs; youth unemployment; Labour market flows; Long-term unemployment; Poverty and income distribution

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/employment/strat/kilm/index.htm>

## THE GLOBALIZATION INDEX

The A.T. Kearney/Foreign Policy Globalization Index tracks and assesses changes in four key components of global integration, incorporating such measures as trade and financial flows, movement of people across borders, international telephone traffic, Internet usage, and participation in international treaties and peacekeeping operations. 62 countries are currently ranked. The Index ranks countries according to these four main components. Individual country reports can be generated as well as Cross-country comparisons across each variable

[http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story\\_id=2493&popup\\_delayed=1](http://www.foreignpolicy.com/story/cms.php?story_id=2493&popup_delayed=1)

## DEVELOPING AN AGENDA FOR SMES

The IOE and ILO have developed a SME development Toolkit specifically for employers organizations. The toolkit is designed around three pillars:

### THE TOOLKIT IS DESIGNED AROUND THREE PILLARS:

**REPRESENTATION** - increasing SME/MSME membership of the employers' organization;

**ADVOCACY** - developing the capacity of the employers' organization to 'advocate' for the right policy environment for SME/MSMEs to thrive;

**SERVICES** - specifically identifying services for SME/MSMEs.

*\* All three are linked*

The toolkit includes assessment guides and country studies as well as tools and other resources that can be applied in day-to-day operations. Contact the IOE/ILO or access the toolkit directly at: [www.ioe-emp.org](http://www.ioe-emp.org)

## ASSESSING AND COMPARING ENTREPRENEURSHIP POLICIES

**The Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM)** research program is an annual assessment of the national level of entrepreneurial activity. The research program finds global comparisons, national reports, and special topic reports based on the annual data collection cycle. This material can be downloaded at: <http://www.gemconsortium.org>

## TOOLS TO ASSIST TRADE POLICES

The International Trade Centre (ITC) has a number of information sources for international trade and business development (largely accessible through the Internet) and tools, such as practical guides, methodologies and approaches which can be adapted to local requirements. <http://www.intracen.org>

The **Market Access Map** is an interactive database of tariff and market access barriers. It contains the market access conditions applied at the bilateral level by 169 importing countries to the products exported by over 200 countries and territories. It takes into account almost all multilateral, regional and bilateral trade agreements. The Market Access Map is available online at [www.macmap.org](http://www.macmap.org) and CD-ROM. Country extractions are available upon request. Contact [macmap@intracen.org](mailto:macmap@intracen.org) for more information.



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