

EXPORT TO CANADA NEWS

INFORMATION · ADVICE · CONTACT

CREATING SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS FOR WOMEN EXPORTERS IN THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET



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STEVE TIPMAN
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
TFO CANADA

Supporting women entrepreneurs

This edition of TFO Canada's newsletter has a focus on supporting women exporters in accessing the Canadian and international markets. As many know, working with women-led and women-owned businesses has been a hallmark of our work for many years. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are widely viewed as the engines of economic growth as they have a proportionately higher impact on job creation. However, SMEs have difficulty finding their trade niche due to constraints related primarily to the cost of trade. Among exporting SMEs, women-led SMEs face additional constraints to compete and benefit from trade. TFO Canada addresses key constraints faced by women-led and men-led SMEs. Furthermore, by focusing on trade sectors with higher potential for job creation for women, TFO Canada's work ensures that diversified export growth translates into growth that works for women.

TFO Canada also seeks to address the main constraints faced by women exporters such their lack of knowledge, skills, resources and networks to access global trade, as well as their low involvement as members and leaders of trade support institutions. This prevents women from engaging in international trade on an equal footing with men, accessing resources available for promoting exports, and earning an income as exporters. Women are shown to invest a higher proportion of income back into the household which has knock-on impacts on other poverty indicators, such as nutrition, health and education.

In a post-COVID-19 world, it is critical that we continue to enhance women's economic empowerment by increasing economic opportunities for women to develop their full potential as SME owners involved in exporting. Using a holistic approach to address their multi-dimensional constraints, women should be able to contribute to their own economic success and the economic success of their communities.

TFO Canada contributes to addressing constraints faced by women exporters and other marginalized groups to adapt their products for foreign markets and expand their exports to Canada and foreign markets through capacity building and technical expertise, including establishing an online presence, digital marketing, e-commerce strategies and building an export plan.



Tipman's Trade Tip

When it comes to relationships, you seldom get a second chance to make a first impression. Since online searching is an effective way for buyers to find new supply sources, having a good web-presence is very important. Your company wants to look its best so improving your online presence, including social media channels, is a way of signaling to potential customers that you are serious and ready to conduct business with them.

TFO Canada is pleased to announce the release of a new Market Information Paper (MIP) - 'Guide for Women Exporters to Access the Canadian and International markets'. The document will be available in English, French and Spanish in the first week of July 2023. Please ensure you are [registered](#) with us to access the gain full access to the documents.

Guide for Women Exporters: How to Access the Canadian and International Markets

By Beverley Rodrigues, TFO Canada Associate



Women led SMEs from Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya at the International Food and Drinks Event (IFE), in London United Kingdom.

This comprehensive guide is a one-stop resource, simplifying the export preparation process. We present key questions to help define your export expectations and assess your potential for success in the Canadian and international markets. While our sector-specific MIPs provide information on export access for a range of products such as processed foods, textiles, and natural cosmetics, this MIP covers important aspects such as meeting buyer expectations, negotiation strategies, communicating effectively with buyers, preparation for export promotion activities, and collaboration with peers.

This MIP highlights new and growing consumer trends, including sustainable and innovative foods, food prices, health and wellness, and ethical sourcing. We also update retailers' focus on strengthening supply chains post-COVID pandemic, presenting new opportunities for women exporters. Additionally, the guide contains information on actions taken by the Canadian federal government to support gender equality.

Accessing the Canadian and international markets requires awareness of cultural nuances and staying current with new and emerging business practices. We have dedicated three sections in this guide, with tips and materials to help you research buyer needs, important considerations when crafting and communicating the unique value of your product and establishing rapport with potential buyers.

Social media has become a powerful sales and marketing tool. Therefore, we have highlighted the dos and don'ts of social media and the steps for building a social media strategy. We also emphasize the use of storytelling as a powerful selling and communication tool, providing examples and links to websites of women-owned businesses that have successfully used stories to capture the attention of Canadian and international buyers. We encourage you to explore the examples of stories provided in this guide and customize your own.

Authenticity and a focus on caring for workers and the environment are key factors potential customers look for; we have included notes on understanding sustainability and practical steps to implementing a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) plan in this guide.

As you progress through the MIP, you will find information on preparing for export promotion activities such as trade fairs, buyer missions, and other promotional activities. We also provide guidance in preparing export documentation and establishing connections with peers before, during, and after these events. The information presented in this new guide will enable you as a woman business owner to navigate the complexities of exporting to international markets and make the most of the opportunities available. TFO Canada is here to support you every step of the way.

Women's Participation in International Trade: TFO Canada and OWIT Join Forces

By Frida Owinga, President Organisation for Women In Trade (OWIT)



TFO Canada and the Organization of Women in International Trade (OWIT) have recently entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance our cooperation and achieve our shared objectives. Both organizations are non-profit entities dedicated to promoting international trade, with a particular focus on empowering women entrepreneurs. This partnership aims to leverage our respective strengths to create sustainable trade partnerships, expand access to international markets, and provide valuable support and resources to women involved in trade.

OWIT and TFO Canada team members discussing cooperation and shared objectives.

Mutual Promotion and Networking:

Under the MoU, TFO Canada will actively promote OWIT, its chapters, and services through its website, specifically targeting businesswomen engaged in exporting from developing countries. Additionally, TFO Canada will highlight OWIT events on its website, which caters to Canadian importers, developing country exporters, and trade support institutions. TFO Canada will encourage its associates, many of whom are experienced businesswomen in the trade sector, to consider joining OWIT, further expanding the network and opportunities for collaboration.

Information Exchange and Training:

In reciprocation, OWIT will utilize its website and various informational activities to inform its members, particularly those from developing and emerging countries, about the trade development services provided by TFO Canada. This exchange of information will enable women entrepreneurs to access valuable resources, including trade expertise, advice, and contacts. Both organizations will explore joint activities aimed at expanding their reach and services for businesswomen in developing countries. Possibilities include translating the OWIT International website into Spanish and featuring TFO Canada as a link on the OWIT website.

Capacity Building and Support:

TFO Canada and OWIT recognize the importance of training and advisory services for women involved in international trade. We will explore the development of products such as coaching, mentoring, and webinars targeted at businesswomen in trade. By jointly delivering these resources, we aim to empower women entrepreneurs and equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed in the global marketplace.

Cross-Promotion and Collaboration:

To maximize our impact, we will leverage our websites, newsletters, social media platforms, and other communication channels to cross-promote programming opportunities. This collaborative approach will facilitate greater awareness of initiatives, events, and services provided by TFO Canada and OWIT, resulting in increased engagement and participation from women entrepreneurs across the globe.

In the realm of international trade, let us remember that empowering women is not only a goal but a catalyst for global progress. Together, TFO Canada and OWIT unite in a powerful partnership, fueling the dreams of women entrepreneurs, breaking barriers, and illuminating paths to success. Let us embrace the spirit of collaboration, harness our potential, and let our joint aspirations soar beyond borders. The world awaits the transformative impact of women in trade. Empowered women trade, and in doing so, they change the world for greater good.

PROGRAM UPDATES

Asia and the Middle East

Preparations underway for Buyers Mission to Vietnam and SME Training in Export Readiness in Indonesia

The Asia team continues to work actively with partners, local technical experts, and coordinators to implement the next program activities in the region. Preparations are underway for upcoming buyer missions and gender-responsive trainings on export readiness to SMEs in Indonesia. With the support of the Vietnam Trade Promotion Agency (Vietrade) and the Embassy of Vietnam in Canada, 30 Vietnamese SMEs in the processed food sector were selected for one-on-one consultations; in preparation for the buyer's mission to Vietnam scheduled for November 2023.



one-on-one consultation with an SME from Vietnam

Africa and Haiti

Morocco and Haiti Delegation at Spring SIAL Trade Show in Toronto



Morocco and Haiti delegation participate in info-session ahead of SIAL Toronto Trade Show.

A delegation of nine exporters (five women led) from Morocco and four from Haiti (one women led) were in Toronto from May 9-11 participating in SIAL 2023 - the largest food innovation trade show in North America, filled with tastings and demonstrations, more than 130 business meetings were held resulting in several confirmed orders!

Export Launchpad Uganda – Training of Trainers.

Following the successful launch of the Export Readiness training manual in March 2023, more than 50 district commercial officers across Uganda participated in the training of trainers' program under the Export launchpad Uganda project from May 8-19. Export Launchpad Uganda is a joint initiative of the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), Trade Development Fund, and Global Affairs Canada through its Women in Trade for Inclusive and Sustainable Growth (WITISG) project, implemented by TFO Canada in collaboration with the Uganda Export Promotion Board. The training will also be offered to 112 SMEs from the agrifood value chains and subsectors in order to provide women-led SMEs with the necessary tools and knowledge to expand their businesses in international markets.

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) Training in Haiti

In Haiti, GESI training was delivered on May 15 to 17 in Cap-Haïtien, in collaboration with TFO Canada's TSI partner, Haiti's Chamber of Commerce for Women Entrepreneurs (CCFEH). The training was delivered to eight participants, of which six were women.

Mozambique and Zambia at Africa Big 7 Trade Show in South Africa



SME delegation from Mozambique during the Africa Big 7 Trade Show in Johannesburg, South Africa.

TFO Canada led a delegation of 10 SMEs (six women led) from Mozambique and eight SMEs (five women led) from Zambia to the Africa Big 7 Trade Show from June 19-22 in Johannesburg South Africa - one of the largest meeting places for the food and beverage industry on the African continent. The delegation displayed a variety of products from essential oils to raw natural honey, cassava flour, fresh quails, jumbo quails, fruits like mango, guava, strawberry, papaya and passion fruit to premium chocolates, shell groundnuts and much more! 300 B2B meetings, numerous potential agreements and business deals are set to be finalized.



Left: The tour covered visits to five retail stores to show the participants a representative sample of high-end and discount grocery stores from Canada's top 3 chains (Loblaws, Sobeys and Metro).



Right: Peruvian delegation's visit to the Ontario Food Terminal, the largest wholesale fresh produce distribution centre in Canada, and the third largest in North America.

Peru Delegation Attended CPMA Convention and Trade Show in Toronto

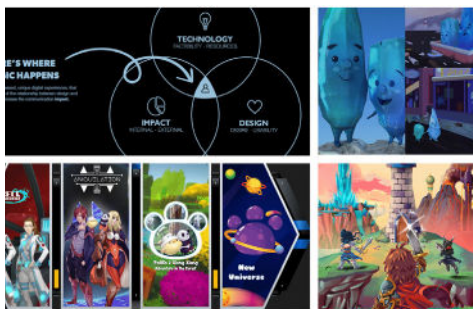
In partnership with the PROMPERU, TFO Canada facilitated a market familiarization tour and organised an info-session in Toronto for six women led and one man led small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from Peru in the fresh fruit and vegetables sector during the Canadian Produce and Market Association (CPMA) Convention and Trade Show from April 25-27. Alia Blais, Policy and Program Leader, Food Import and Export Division at Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA), Derek Kwan and Parveen Mann, Border Services Officers at Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA), and Jaime Bustamante, Director of Trading Assistance at the Fruit and Vegetable Dispute Resolution Corporation provided valuable insight in food safety, labelling, packaging and customs regulations, and dispute resolution mechanisms in Canada. During the trade show, the SMEs participated in 86 B2B meetings with export sales estimated at CAD \$ 2 million over the next 12 months.

Canadian Buyers Mission Visited Honduras in May

TFO Canada led a Canadian Buyers Mission to San Pedro Sula, Honduras from May 18-20 in collaboration with Cámara de Comercio e Industrias de Cortés. The delegation participated in Agromercados Honduras one of the most important events promoting the agricultural sector in Honduras – attracting more than 2,000 participants and 800 exhibitors biannually. More than 80 B2B meetings were facilitated between eight Canadian importers and 11 SMEs from Honduras opening new avenues and product offerings! The delegation participated in a field visit, where they were able to observe farming and harvesting practices, and the preparation and packaging of oriental vegetables and exotic fruits. Over the next 12 months export sales are estimated to be more than CAD \$ 2.7 million .



Canadian Buyers delegation at Agromercados Trade Show in Honduras.



Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) Virtual Trade Mission Held for Colombia

TFO Canada in partnership with PROCOLOMBIA, organised a virtual trade mission with talented Colombian service providers in the animation, games and digital creative content space from May 2 - June 23. Fifteen Colombian SMEs were promoted, with 17 B2B meetings held with Canadian companies. Most of the Colombian companies participating in the mission have experience working with US and European based clients and partners, and looked to expand and partner with Canadian firms to deliver high quality projects.

PROGRAM UPDATES

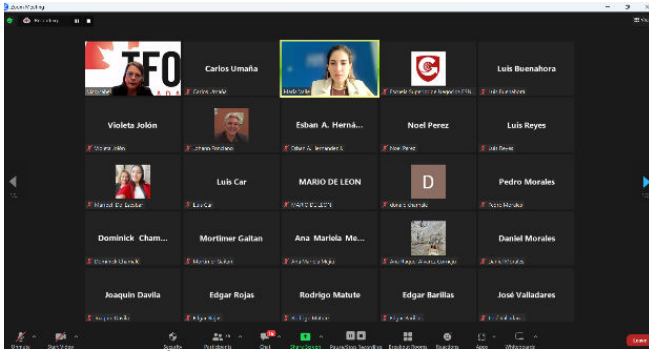
Latin America and the Caribbean

Webinar: -'Supports Guatemalan Companies in Food sector to Export to Canada'

The Guatemalan Exporters Association (AGEXPORT) and TFO Canada organised this webinar on May 25. TFO Canada delivered a presentation on the Canadian market, followed by a highly interactive Q & A session.

Guatemala received SME Export Readiness Training, April - June 2023

As part of TFO Canada's capacity building efforts in Honduras and Guatemala, export readiness training was delivered to 87 SMEs (49 women led) from April to June 2023. This training



SME participants from Guatemala during the Webinar on Food Exports to Canada.

helped the SMEs improve their ability to integrate best practices in environment and climate change, corporate social responsibility, digital marketing, and e-commerce into their export plans, while identifying Canada or other markets of interest.

Gender and Social Inclusion Training and Assessment Survey in Honduras and Guatemala, April – June 2023

In Guatemala, a gender assessment survey was launched by the Guatemala Export Association (Agexport) to ascertain their association as part of their Gender and Social Inclusion (GESI) Action Plan.

In Honduras, three initiatives were carried out to raise awareness and transfer knowledge in the areas of gender inclusion to help develop an organizational culture based on equality, against discrimination and gender-based violence.

SPOTLIGHT ON TFO CANADA ACTIVITIES

TFO Canada Attended Casablanca Conference



TFO Canada's Executive Director, Steve Tipman at the Casablanca Conference in Morocco

Morocco is on its way to becoming the new destination for innovation, collaboration, and soft power! Steve Tipman, Executive Director, TFO Canada attended the first edition of the Casablanca Conference with the theme "Morocco Soft Power: Emergence of nation branding?" in May and witnessed the enthusiasm of the speakers for the country's cultural richness and its potential for development.

Morocco has the potential to become a truly global brand, and TFO Canada is excited to be part of that journey supporting SMEs from Morocco to access international markets through trade.

Our Executive Director Presented to Standing Senate Committee



TFO Canada's Executive Director Steve Tipman appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade on May 17 to discuss Bill C-47, Division 4 on supporting the economic growth of developing countries.

Learn more [here](#).



TFO Canada joins Cooperation Canada

TFO Canada is honored to join forces with Cooperation Canada and looks forward to strengthening and creating partnerships for sustainable trade and development. Cooperation Canada (formerly the Canadian Council for International Cooperation) brings together civil society organizations working in the international development and humanitarian sector. Advocating for these groups by convening sector leaders, influencing policy and building capacity, together, Cooperation Canada works with partners both inside and outside Canada to build a world that is fair, safe, and sustainable for all.

Regional Updates

Susan Baka, TFO Canada Ontario Regional Representative

Our Ontario Regional Representative participated in these two large spring shows in Toronto to generate awareness among exhibitors about how TFO Canada's resources can help them, as importers and buyers, to source from developing country exporters:



Susan Baka, Ontario Regional Representative and Steve Tipman, Executive Director of TFO Canada at CPMA.

- **CPMA 2023 Trade Show.** Featuring over 600 exhibitors and over 300 companies from around the globe, it is Canada's largest fresh fruit and vegetables event.

- **SIAL Canada 2023,** North America's largest food innovation trade show, returned to Toronto after a four-year hiatus and spotlighted innovation across the entire value chain. It featured over 1,000 exhibitors from more than 50 countries. Among the key trends evident were beverages that are botanical and functional as well as sustainable products and packaging.



Left: Women led SME showcasing Authentic Moroccan tea at SIAL Trade Show in Toronto



Right: SME delegation from Haiti showcasing herbal teas, chocolate spread, ginger powder and more at SIAL Trade Show in Toronto

Regional Updates

Allison Boulton, TFO Canada British Columbia Regional Representative



In the province of British Columbia, the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre was hopping for the annual Canadian Health and Food Association (CHFA) NOW West trade show. There were 950 exhibiting booths from all over the world, including a beautiful country pavilion from Indonesia. The show initiated many connections and conversations about how TFO Canada can help Canada businesses sustainably source from developing nations.

Allison Boulton, TFO Canada Regional Representative in British Columbia, with Hendra Halim, Consul General of Indonesia in Vancouver at the Indonesia booth at CHFA NOW Vancouver 2023

New Staff

Christian Sivière, TFO Canada Quebec Regional Representative



Christian Sivière, TFO Canada Quebec Regional Representative

TFO Canada is pleased to announce the appointment of Christian Sivière as the new TFO Canada Regional Representative in Quebec. Following a 30-year career in international logistics, Christian Sivière started a Montreal-based import-export consultancy in 2010, Solimpex, active in two areas: consulting to help SMEs grow internationally; and training on the Logistics, Customs and Regulatory aspects of international trade, free trade agreements, supply chain management and related issues.

Christian lectures for the Canadian International Freight Forwarders Association, gives seminars and webinars for various trade organizations like the Montreal Chamber of Commerce, Invest Ottawa, Supply Chain Canada and similar, and personalized training for importers and exporters. He publishes articles in Inside Logistics and Supply Professional.

BENIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY: PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP



Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) training participants from the Benin Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI-Benin)

The Benin Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI-Benin) has been in full swing since 2022. The institution has implemented numerous initiatives for Beninese businesses, promoting gender equality, female entrepreneurship and export preparedness. That's why TFO Canada is delighted to have partnered with the CCI-Benin for the "Women in Trade for Sustainable Inclusive Growth" (WITSIG) project, and to have contributed to strengthening these themes at the institutional and SME levels.

From July 5-9 2021, TFO Canada provided training on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) to 20 managers and consular representatives of the Benin Chamber of Commerce and Industry, including 13 women. Through this familiarisation with the concept of gender issues, the staff noted that although there were efforts regarding gender in the activities of their establishment, the methodology and internal organisation could be reviewed to better

include women.

"Promoting gender and aligning with the vision of the Beninese government, which has made the promotion of women and gender empowerment a priority in view of the many challenges facing women in the business world, is now a priority for Mr Arnaud Akakpo, President of the Benin Chamber of Commerce and Industry," explains Ms Cellia Akinhola Amoussougbo, WITSIG National Project Manager. "After the GESI training, women are much more at the heart of many activities to boost their self-confidence. By way of example, women have been promoted to decision-making positions so that their skills can be put to greater use. In addition, the composition of our strategic decision-making body is dominated by women (6 women and 4 men).

On the recommendation of TFO Canada, the Benin Chamber of Commerce and Industry sought and obtained support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the development of a gender policy and gender action plan for the Chamber, the terms of reference for which were drawn up and validated in collaboration with the UNDP.

In February and March 2022, CCI-Benin organised training for SMEs run mainly by women on export preparation as part of the WITSIG project. 107 SMEs benefited from modules on packaging and conditioning standards, quality product development, sanitary measures and certificates of origin, among others. They left with a better understanding of the international market.

But the actions did not stop there. The CCI-Benin has run training courses enabling businesses both in Cotonou and in rural areas to flourish and build their capacity on topics related to their areas of activity. For example, 40 entrepreneurs with low literacy levels attended capacity-building sessions on the basics of business management in the Fon national language.

Business leaders (men and women) have been trained in Mandarin (the language commonly spoken in China) and in business English, to help them better exchange ideas and establish economic partnerships with their English-speaking and Chinese counterparts, and to take foreign markets by storm.

"We also emphasised the need for companies to take part in trade fairs to raise awareness of their products and establish business relations," said Ms Akinhola. CCI-Benin has encouraged Beninese SMEs to take part in the Africallia fair organised in Burkina Faso.

This year, the CCI-Benin has drawn up an annual gender work plan to meet the specific needs of Beninese business owners in various areas. In April, 50 business leaders took part in a training workshop on "Gender, Social Inclusion and the Importance of Gender Strategy in Business". These business leaders were made aware of the issue of gender equality in the entrepreneurial ecosystem, with a view to taking gender into account in business strategy and operations as a key to success. They also learned about the tools of good business management and the skills they need to make their mark in the business world.

BENIN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY: CONTINUED...

These projects include initiatives to help Beninese SMEs obtain marketing authorisation, with the aim of making Beninese products a brand that can stand out in the local and international markets.

In this context, capacity-building sessions have been organised for heads of companies run by women operating in the agri-food sector. The sessions cover good hygiene practices, good manufacturing practices, the HACCP method and obtaining bar codes with a view to obtaining marketing authorisation, with the collaboration of the National Agency for Standardisation, Metrology and Quality Control (ANM).

In the digital field, the COVID-19 pandemic has anchored the importance of the Internet in sharing these various modules and experiences across the country. SMEs can now take advantage of webinars, electronic media developed by CCI-Benin, and forums on WhatsApp and various social communication media such as Facebook, YouTube, etc. to inform SMEs about existing opportunities for developing their activities.

In addition, as part of the *mon entreprise.bj* project initiated by CCI-Benin, a partnership agreement was signed in February 2022 to help businesses create a website and e-mail addresses. The aim of the partnership is to provide 1,000 businesses registered in the CCI-Benin database with a modern communications tool free of charge for the first year. To date, 653 companies of the 1,000 expected have received support. These include more than half of the SMEs benefiting from training in export preparation services.

Finally, to enable SMEs to strengthen their resilience, counter the various shocks and recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, CCI-Benin has obtained a grant from Expertise France to develop, over a period of 20 months, the digital transformation skills of 1,000 formal and informal SMEs, 50% of which are women, through the "E-TCHITE" project for the digitalisation of SMEs in Benin. The fundamental objective is to support the digital transformation of MSMEs in order to make them resilient.

CCI-Benin's commitment and quick interventions to support small and medium-sized enterprises in Benin to access international markets is highly commendable. TFO Canada is proud of this partnership and wishes CCI-Benin every success in its future endeavours!

TFO Canada improves lives through the creation of sustainable trade partnerships for exporters from developing countries with Canadian and foreign buyers. We facilitate access to the Canadian marketplace and share Canadian trade expertise for the benefit of smaller male and female owned/managed exporters from developing countries and for the men and women they employ. Founded in 1980, TFO Canada is a non-governmental, non profit organization.



This newsletter is produced with the financial support of the Government of Canada provided through Global Affairs Canada.

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