**HOW TO ESTABLISH
AND IMPLEMENT AN E-TRADE DESK**

GUIDE 4

ACTION PLAN
To establish an E-Trade Desk

TRADE
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INTRODUCTION

The accumulated experience of the WTPF indicates that e-Trade Desks are more likely to be successful if they implement an action plan based on a realistic market strategy. In order to fulfill their role in helping SMEs participate more widely in international markets and e-commerce,

e-Trade Desks must have clear objectives and a well- targeted customer base.

Determining the e-Trade Desk services on the basis of a market analysis involves defining how to incorporate sufficient flexibility to be able to adapt the service structure to changing conditions. It involves exploring which companies are likely to benefit from e-Trade Desk services, which type of services are likely to result in performance improvement of SMEs in international trade and e-commerce, and how to market these services. Marketing is an extremely important aspect by promoting the WTPF brand, e-Trade Desk stand to gain from an internationally consolidated image. The central services provided by the WTPF are also an excellent anchor for the marketing of additional e-Trade Desk services.

The e-Trade Desk´s Action Plan should cover a period of 2 years. The present document sets down some of the basic elements involved in the plan preparation, intended to serve as a guide to addressing those aspects conducive to successful functioning. Each e-Trade Desk can of course mold its Action Plan to its specific needs and local circumstances, in so far as these lie within the boundaries of the Terms & Conditions... document signed with the WTPF.

BASIC ELEMENTS OF THE ACTION PLAN
A. DESCRIPTION AND STRATEGY

The Action Plan should start with a description of the e-Trade Desk, its role and aims, its vision (what you would like it to achieve), and its target market. The e-Trade Desk's formal position, interaction and responsibilities within the host institution and a brief description of the WTPF should also be included.

The aims of the e-Trade Desk should be placed in the context of :

a) the local business community:

- a brief overview of the role and activities of the host institution should be given. Perhaps the host institution is already engaged in assisting SMEs to enter international markets and hence shares the goals of the WTPF. Does the host institution have in-depth knowledge of the local market to make available to other e-Trade Desks or Trade Points? Does the host institution have close links to local enterprises? What is the nature of the relationship? Does the host institution provide training courses and other tools that it could provide to the e-Trade Desk and Trade Point community/the WTPF?

- Will the e-Trade Desk partner with other entities to provide some of its services? Give

details of these partnerships (the legal form and nature/content of the partnership agreements)

b) the World Trade Point Federation: how will the e-Trade Desk contribute to the functioning and goals of the e-Trade Desk Network as a whole and constitute an asset to the WTPF?

Defining the action plan of the e-Trade Desk involves basically showing how it intends to gain a competitive edge in the target market. For the evaluation of local market conditions in the strategic section you can make use of the same market analysis data you gathered for the Background Document. The following are some of the points to be covered:
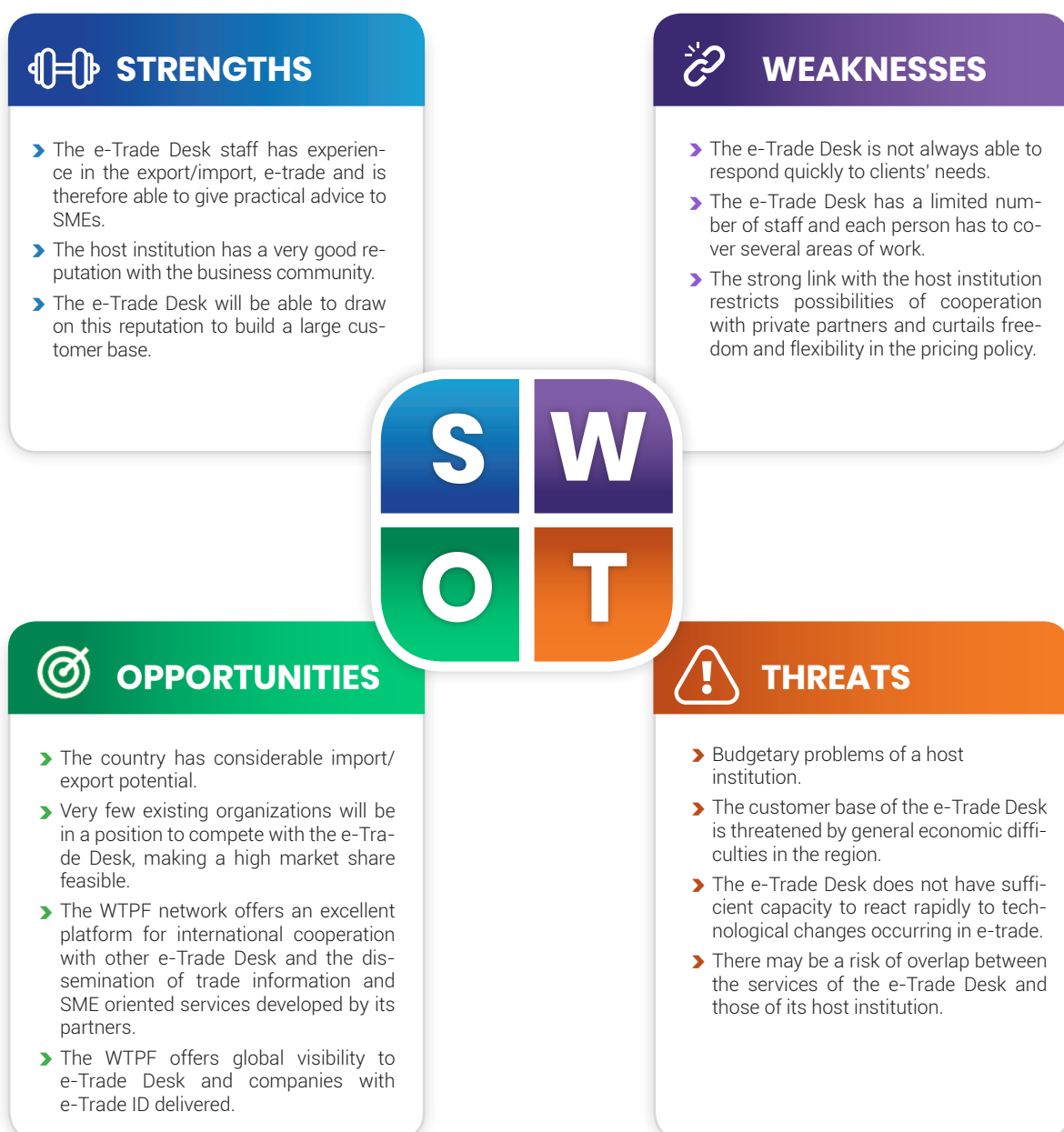
The demand for e-Trade Desk services: What is the potential market for e-Trade Desk services? Comment on the number of exporting/importing enterprises in the area covered by the e-Trade Desk and other entities that might be interested in e-Trade Desk services. Elaborate here on the initial information provided in the Background Document accompanying the formal letter of request to set up an e-Trade Desk, and refer to the critical mass of companies to which it will be delivered the eTradeID, as indicated in the Terms & Conditions document signed.

What are the services that are most in demand? How is the number of potential clients likely to develop in the next two years?

What links already exist between the host institution and potential clients of the e-Trade Desk? Does the host institution have a database of clients who could also be offered e-Trade Desk services? Will the e-Trade Desk be physically set up in a place with good visibility and of easy access for businessmen? etc.

Market niche for the e-Trade Desk: How will the e-Trade Desk position itself in the market with regard to the existing competition? What (groups of) services will it provide? What market niche does it intend to occupy? In sum, what will the e-Trade Desk´s competitive advantage be in this particular niche as compared with competitors (if competitors exist)?

Hurdles and how they will be dealt with: In outlining how you plan to go about achieving your objectives, overcoming any hurdles and deciding on the necessary steps to take, it may be useful to include a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis. Carrying out an analysis using the SWOT framework will help focus the activities into areas where the e-Trade Desk is strong, and where the greatest opportunities lie. The following table provides an illustration of the type of concepts to be included.

STRENGTHS

- The e-Trade Desk staff has experience in the export/import, e-trade and is therefore able to give practical advice to SMEs.
- The host institution has a very good reputation with the business community.
- The e-Trade Desk will be able to draw on this reputation to build a large customer base.

WEAKNESSES

- The e-Trade Desk is not always able to respond quickly to clients' needs.
- The e-Trade Desk has a limited number of staff and each person has to cover several areas of work.
- The strong link with the host institution restricts possibilities of cooperation with private partners and curtails freedom and flexibility in the pricing policy.

OPPORTUNITIES

- The country has considerable import/export potential.
- Very few existing organizations will be in a position to compete with the e-Trade Desk, making a high market share feasible.
- The WTPF network offers an excellent platform for international cooperation with other e-Trade Desk and the dissemination of trade information and SME oriented services developed by its partners.
- The WTPF offers global visibility to e-Trade Desk and companies with e-Trade ID delivered.

THREATS

- Budgetary problems of a host institution.
- The customer base of the e-Trade Desk is threatened by general economic difficulties in the region.
- The e-Trade Desk does not have sufficient capacity to react rapidly to technological changes occurring in e-trade.
- There may be a risk of overlap between the services of the e-Trade Desk and those of its host institution.

B. ACTION PLAN

Having defined where your e-Trade Desk is heading you next have to design an Action Plan to take you there. This will involve a description of the tools to be used to achieve your objectives, covering a list of the products and services to be provided and the corresponding Marketing Plan.

1. Products and services to be offered by the e-Trade Desk

This is the very core of the Action Plan. It is of utmost importance that the e-Trade Desk services be well designed to address the identified target client and to show that it brings

added value to the host institution instead of competing with it. Explain what services the host institution offers, how e-Trade Desk services fit into this scheme, and how the e-Trade Desk will add value to the host institution services.

Explain the nature of the individual services and/or service packages to be offered by the e-Trade Desk, specifying which will be provided directly by the e-Trade Desk and which will be provided by partner institutions. Can the potential e-Trade Desk clients be categorized into different market segments (e.g. by size and area of activity, foreign/local, government/ private sector)?

You may summarize the information on the main products and services of the e-Trade Desk in a series of tables using the following example.

> Name of product or service
> Description
> Targeted market segment provided by e-Trade Desk staff or in cooperation with a partner
> Mode of delivery
> Price
> Resources needed for the developmentand provision of the product/ service
> Date of delivery

Minimum services that a functional e-Trade Desk is expected to provide.

Remember that in order to be awarded functional status an e-Trade Desk must have fully submitted to WTPF the information for their web profile and **offer at least**:

- the services included in the **e-Trade Desk CENTRAL** service module (see the first module of the **e-Trade Desk SERVICE PACKAGES** Guidelines)
- advice and consultation on all aspects of international and e-trade transactions
- information on providers of trade-related services in the country and the range of services they offer to clients

A word on the e-Trade Desk profile present in the WTPF website.

The WTPF has provided a dynamic website with ample high quality trade-related information and tools into which each e-Trade Desk will have its profile inserted by WTPF. e-Trade Desk must assure a constant update of its own profile by sending to the WTPF regularly updated information.

e-Trade Desk must have clearly inserted in the host entity Home page the e-banner with the link to the WTPF website.

E-Trade ID. Delivery together with WTPF of a critical mass of local companies and further expansion of the database requires e-Trade Desks to include in their Marketing Plan a strategy aimed at increasing the number of companies participating in the system.

ETO trust system. e-Trade Desks are expected to draw up a plan for the collection and dissemination of electronic trade opportunities at the local level, whether by e-mail, website,

fax, bulletin or newsletter, or in a targeted manner (trade alerts for specific categories of opportunities) and also to routinely upload trade leads into the ETO trust system. Explain how this will be carried out and where the trade leads will be sourced.

Some examples of additional services that can be provided by e-Trade Desks.

General information services	Matchmaking services
• Market profiles; e-Impo/Expo/ Investment Guides • E-bulletin with business news;	• Search for e-business partners and matchings with ETOs; participation in trade e- fairs; buyers-sellers' virtual meetings
Market Research	**Consultancy**
• Tailor-made market research / Price surveys	• Legal aspects of international e-trade • Business plans
Business Facilitation	**E-commerce/Information technologies services**
• Business Centre services: design and printing of promotional documentation; translation / Interpretation services; organization of visits and business interviews	• Web page design (company presentations, virtual catalogues...); design and implementation of databases; design and production of multimedia products;
Training	**Transaction-related services**
• Webinars on specific trade-related topics • Web campaigns and online events for companies	• Issuing of trade certificates • Freight forwarding • Customs clearance • Insurance services • International payments

2. Implementation Schedule

The implementation schedule can most usefully be presented in the form of a timeline or a chart. If text is preferred, the schedule must be very clearly outlined.

3. Physical Infrastructure and Human Resources

Describe the office infrastructure, organizational structure set-up to be made available in the e-Trade Desk.

Regarding ICT structure, please consult **GUIDE 6 ICT Requirements**.

Human Resources:

Give details of the human resources structure of the e-Trade Desk. Comment on competences present in the e-Trade Desk. In what fields does/will the staff have strong know-how? W here could bottlenecks occur?

4. Marketing Plan

How will the e-Trade Desk promote itself among its target groups ? W hat communication channels and materials will be used: seminars, events, radio emissions, TV spots, brochures,

e-mail lists, on-line banners, reports on e-Trade Desk activities, etc. ?

How will the initial promotion related to the launching of the e-Trade Desk be managed? (Who will be invited, what will be presented? etc.). How will the promotion be maintained thereafter? With what periodicity / on what occasions will the target groups be approached? Are there any special marketing campaigns/events planned? Give details.

How will the e-Trade Desk foster good relations with the press? W hat contacts already exist? (Frequent and positive appearance in the press is a very effective and "objective" – as compared with paid publicity – way of promoting the e-Trade Desk and its services.)

How will internal marketing of the e-Trade Desk vis-à-vis the host institution be managed so that the latter regards the e-Trade Desk as an asset?

Promotional methods: Direct promotion concentrates on more direct means of communication with potential clients and includes means like:

• face-to-face contact telephone calls
• customized fax, mail and e-mail promotion
• customized online contacts

Arguments in favour of this type of promotion: it allows for immediate feedback and customized promotion approaches, and helps build loyalty relationships. The drawback is that it can be relatively costly and not effective if response rates are low.

Indirect promotion includes promotion through:

• advertisement on the radio/TV
• advertisement/articles in the press
• advertisement in brochures, posters, flyers
• promotion on the website
• promotion through partners, distributors, agents, etc.

Arguments in favour: its low cost and larger potential audience. However, it is not focused and therefore may not result in a high response rate. For this reason, it is difficult to evaluate its impact.