FINAL REPORT

ON

TRAINING SESSION

FOR CROATIAN EXPORTERS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

IN INTERNATIONAL MARKET RESEARCH

CROATIA ENHANCING SME PERFORMANCE PROJECT

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For
CEA
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Final Report on the Training in International Market Research with Recommendations on Further Activities Designed to Develop Know-How and Skills of CEA Members.

The training was delivered to 33 persons represented 21 companies. These companies represented a variety of fields. Their level of present export involvement varies from very active, through limited to the countries of the former Yugoslavia, to just beginning to expand beyond Croatia. It was obvious during the workshop that all the participants were very serious about their desire to increase export intensity and consequently to utilize appropriate methods of international market research.

The training workshop was divided into six sections:

1. Introduction - Role of Market Research
2. Accessing Information
3. Managing Information
4. Market Research Personnel
5. Role of Language and Culture
6. On the Ground with Potential Partners

Each session was based on a PowerPoint presentation supplemented by discussion and questions and answers. Although content included theory it purposely focused on practical knowledge and how to apply that knowledge.

Part of each session's discussion was to encourage individual participants to speak of their own experiences in the context of the session's content. In addition to bringing forth new matters that were then addressed, this method also reinforced the material covered in the PowerPoint presentations by eliciting back-and-forth exchanges between the participants themselves about how they applied or could apply various research applications I had spoken about – such as obtaining target contact info. At times my role thus moved from instructor to moderator. I emphasized during the training that international market research (in particular its Accessing Information aspect) should be treated as a very flexible science and that what is appropriate in one context might not work in another.

In addition to samples contained within the PowerPoint sessions, I supplied the participants with supplementary documentation that included samples of Action Plans (specific description of research tasks) and research reports resulting from such action plans. The purpose of these samples was to both show how research was to be directed and what such research could achieve.

After the workshop, each participant was contacted for feedback. The response received described the workshop as very helpful. One participant would have liked

more time spent on researching potential competitors. Participants also expressed a desire to participate in future training sessions.

I would recommend that further work be done (perhaps through CEA?) in the following areas:

1. Assisting individual companies in the 'structural mechanics' of international market research. By this I mean the creation of an appropriate organizational vehicle through which international market research is done and the designation of the kind of personnel needed to collect information. An organizational vehicle would be a person or group (usually under the export director) with clear research responsibilities. Appropriate personnel refers not only to persons with clear directives but also their aptitude and linguistic and research capabilities. A company in need would thus have to be willing to consider changes in its organization structure and be willing to source new personnel if appropriate personnel are not already in-house.
2. CEA might consider creating a database of internet sites devoted to market information, contacts, etc of each member of the European Union (and other major or potential trading partners for Croatia). This would facilitate a CEA member's first steps when researching a new market.
3. CEA might also consider the creation of an on-going confidential forum through which a CEA participant could access a CEA staff member or consultant with specific queries or problems. This could apply not only to research problems but to related export matters such as exporting to the EU, dealing with partners/agents and sales strategies. Sometimes seemingly simple outside advice can help to alleviate a problem.

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