



# TPSA Project Provides Ongoing FITTskills Training to Enhance Government Support of SME Exports

Developing international business intelligence is one of the most important things a small or medium-sized enterprise (SME) can do to drive their export plans and growth. Through practical and comprehensive international business training, government officials are building their competence to support Indonesian SMEs to succeed in global markets.

The Canada–Indonesia Trade and Private Sector Assistance (TPSA) Project, which is funded by Global Affairs Canada and administered by The Conference Board of Canada, aims to reduce poverty in Indonesia by contributing to sustainable economic growth through the expansion of Indonesian trade with Canada and the encouragement of Canadian investment in Indonesia. To accomplish this, TPSA is focusing its efforts on small/medium enterprises (SMEs). Strengthening the involvement of Indonesian SMEs in trade and investment is intended to help generate sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty in the country.

Within this effort, the Forum for International Trade Training (FITT) was asked to provide two additional one-week FITTskills international business courses to employees of the Indonesian Ministry of Trade, who provide business coaching to Indonesian SMEs. The 23 participants (11 men, 12 women) received practical and comprehensive international business training that will enhance the support they provide to Indonesian SMEs. As part of the training, insights were also provided to trainees regarding best practices for teaching concepts from the FITTskills courses to Indonesian SMEs.



Pernille Fischer Boulter discusses trade research with training participants.

The training took place over two consecutive weeks in Jakarta, Indonesia, January 23–27 and January 30–February 3, 2017, and was delivered by Ms. Pernille Fischer Boulter, CITP, FITT-certified instructor. The courses delivered were International Trade Research and International Trade Finance.

## FITTskills: International Trade Research Training

Participants learned about the importance of well-planned and efficient research for guiding and promoting company activities. Topics addressed



during the training session included developing research objectives that are compatible with corporate business objectives and selecting suitable methods of acquiring data. Course content also exposed the learners to methods to analyze and present researched data effectively and, consequently, methods to identify and evaluate international trade opportunities.

In completing the training, participants are now able to: 1) describe the importance of well-planned and efficient research for guiding and promoting company activities; 2) develop research objectives that are compatible with corporate business objectives; 3) select suitable methods of acquiring data; 4) analyze and present researched data effectively; and 5) identify and evaluate international trade opportunities based on research information.

### Ambassador Lunch

Training participants had the opportunity to meet the Canadian ambassador to Indonesia, Peter MacArthur, who dropped by the training and had lunch with the participants. Also attending the lunch were Sharon Armstrong, Director of International Cooperation, Global Affairs Canada, and Geneviève Asselin, First Secretary (Development), Global Affairs Canada. The participants were excited to have the opportunity to discuss Indonesian and global trade issues with the Canadian officials.



Participants discuss export issues with the Ambassador to Canada over lunch.

### FITTskills: International Trade Finance Training

The content for this course addressed financial methods and tools used to conduct international business transactions successfully. Risks such as commercial and country were discussed, as were risk-mitigating techniques, their use and legal implications. Participants learned how to develop a sound financial plan that will help ensure a business's success.

"I really appreciate this FITTskills training facilitated by TPSA. The training is well-conducted and comprehensive, just the right amount of information for us. For me personally, this training is not only useful but also helpful, because my current job requires me to meet with local entrepreneurs and staff of the provincial Trade Agency."

—AGNES ANGGRAINI  
Trade Analyst, Directorate of Export Development,  
Indonesia Ministry of Trade

In completing the training, participants: 1) acquired a broad overview of the nature and scope of trade finance, particularly the "four pillars" of trade finance—payment facilitation, risk management, financing, and the provision of information related to a transaction; 2) understand the impact of technology on trade finance; 3) understand the major products and services related to trade finance, including the role and requirement of each party to a transaction; 4) appreciate the importance of export credit agencies and international financial institutions in international trade; and 5) understand the importance of adequate planning relative to the financial aspects of international trade.

### Strategies for Success

Similar to past training sessions, there were varying levels of English language expertise among the participants. While some participants were very vocal, others were not as confident speaking out loud in English. When utilizing the adult learning pyramid methodologies, it is important to engage participants on many levels, and that includes oral



Training participants engage in group work.

presentation. The instructor spent time talking about her own challenges with English as a second language and told stories of mistakes she had made over time. It seemed to relax the group, and by the end of the first week they had bonded over language issues; they were teaching the instructor a new word in Bahasa Indonesian each day and she was teaching them a new word in English or Danish.

The English language, or rather the nuances and colloquial English occurring in almost every book, teaching, or negotiating situation, can be hard to grasp for non-native English speakers. For example, the phrase "gut feeling" is used in textbooks for both courses and did not mean anything to the participants. The instructor made a point of explaining such lingo and making it a game to find an equivalent saying in Bahasa, resulting in the participants finding the book less intimidating.

Building on advice from FITT and previous facilitators, having the participants work in groups also worked well to enhance the general understanding of the curriculum. Upon completion of each chapter, the participants were asked to complete one exercise from each chapter and present their answers in a group format. After the first day, the instructor found that the questions and answers from the book worked better if also shown on the projector. Subsequently, all the questions and answers from each chapter were copied and pasted into a PowerPoint slide so that, by the end of each chapter, the visualization of the exercises were shown on the projector also.

Reviewing the previous day each morning became a part of the routine. It was very well received, and several participants prepared questions that could be addressed in the morning review for the benefit of the entire class.

To allow participants to become more familiar with finding solutions in the book, the instructor had participants look up words and phrases in week two. The purpose was to make participants comfortable with finding answers in the book while in an exam situation, where there would be no group discussion to guide an answer. This approach was very well received and became a fun challenge each day.

A second challenge was related to the participants' familiarity with the subject of research. While they were all familiar with the methodologies of research and data gathering, they were lacking experience in using online resources, especially those related to culture and cultural aspects on international trade.

The instructor framed many of the research questions around the three main commodities chosen by the TPSA project for export to Canada—coffee, textiles, and footwear—to give participants practical examples to work with. They compared sizes of clothing in Indonesia with sizes of clothing made in Canada and experienced first-hand that "small" is not necessarily a "small" all over the world. This exercise highlighted the real importance of research. Because participants also expressed a lack of knowledge of specific online tools, time was spent each day going online and using these tools. These included Canadian Importers Database, Trade Data Online (Canada), ITC Trade Map, Executiveplanet.com, Global Consumer Trends, and Euromonitor.

### Participant Feedback

Feedback received from the 23 participants was excellent, with all participants indicating that their knowledge and skills have increased as a result of their participation. In addition, the participants all indicated that they gained a new level of confidence/skills in applying the knowledge gained from these training sessions.

### Conclusions

Developing international business intelligence is one of the most important things an SME can do to drive their export plans and growth. Through the FITTskills practical and comprehensive international business training, employees of the Ministry of Trade of Indonesia are building and enhancing



Training participants celebrate receiving their certificates of training completion.

their competence to support Indonesian SMEs to succeed in global markets.

Most participants are pursuing the Certified International Trade Professional (CITP) designation. The desire by many of the participants to use the FITTSkills learnings in the future was obvious. The ability to handle knowledge transfer and capacity building is a very important skill for future facilitators, as is the use of adult learning methodologies.

The learnings will allow coaches to help SMEs identify and gather the information they need to make smart decisions about when to engage in international trade and to determine which markets are the most profitable. Having the right information helps businesses avoid costly trade and investment mistakes by making the best possible decision the first time.

Throughout the two courses, participant coaches learned everything an importer or exporter needs to know about payment, risk mitigation, financing, the financial flow, and the flow of goods and services in global trade. With this essential knowledge, participant coaches will be able to support SMEs to ensure that their international trade ventures are based on sound financial foundations. By building their international business competencies, participants will help to strengthen the involvement of Indonesian SMEs in trade and investment, thereby generating sustainable economic growth and reducing poverty in the country.

## About the TPSA Project

TPSA is a five-year C\$12-million project funded by the Government of Canada through Global Affairs Canada. The project is executed by The Conference Board of Canada, and the primary implementation partner is the Directorate General for National Export Development, Ministry of Trade.

TPSA is designed to provide training, research, and technical assistance to Indonesian government agencies, the private sector—particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)—academics, and civil society organizations on trade-related information, trade policy analysis, regulatory reforms, and trade and investment promotion by Canadian, Indonesian, and other experts from public and private organizations.

The overall objective of TPSA is to support higher sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty in Indonesia through increased trade and trade-enabling investment between Indonesia and Canada. TPSA is intended to increase sustainable and gender-responsive trade and investment opportunities, particularly for Indonesian SMEs, and to increase the use of trade and investment analysis by Indonesian stakeholders for expanded trade and investment partnerships between Indonesia and Canada.



The expected immediate outcomes of TPSA are:

- improved trade and investment information flows between Indonesia and Canada, particularly for the private sector, SMEs, and women entrepreneurs, including trade-related environmental risks and opportunities;
- enhanced private sector business links between Indonesia and Canada, particularly for SMEs;
- strengthened analytical skills and knowledge of Indonesian stakeholders on how to increase trade and investment between Indonesia and Canada;
- improved understanding of regulatory rules and best practices for trade and investment.

For further information, please contact the Project Office in Jakarta, Indonesia:

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