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**INTERNATIONAL TRADE &
BARRIERS OFFICE**

**PEER REVIEW
PROGRAM:**

Final Report

2019



Generalitat de Catalunya
Government of Catalonia



**Interreg
Europe**



European Union | European Regional Development Fund

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1.1 MOTIVATION OF THE HOST TO CALL FOR AN INTERREGIONAL PEER REVIEW

ACCIÓ launched a new department in 2018 called International Trade & Barriers Office (further known as ITBO) to offer technical support to Catalan companies in their internationalization process. The ITBO provides 5 services, one of those is the Trade Desk, an 'Export Helpdesk' that gives answers to all enquires about trade. The main goal in participating at the Policy Learning Service was to receive advice from other organizations regarding the implementation of an 'Export Helpdesk' in order to improve our performance.

1.2 SPECIFICATION OF THE POLICY CHALLENGE ENCOUNTERED

Trade desk difficulties encountered

- 1 • Lack of knowledge on potential tools and mechanisms that EU offers to support companies during the internationalisation process.
- 2 • Lack of knowledge on denouncing trade barriers at the European level.
- 3 • Lack of awareness on tools and mechanism awareness that EU offers for agencies like ACCIÓ.
- 4 • Lack of knowledge in how Trade Desk could collaborate with other foreign regional organisations (apart from the EEN Network).
- 5 • Lack of an appropriate Content Manager to keep all the information managed.

Demand for peer' support in further details

ACCIÓ was interested in receiving experts with knowledge and experience for the implementation of new operational processes or services equivalent to the TradeDesk/ Export Help Desk. The input

from other organizations, by sharing their ‘know how’ experiences and good practices, would be very beneficial for the Trade Desk in order to improve the operational process.

The most interesting areas for receiving advice were:

Direct Help form the EU	We were interested in learning and acknowledging in detail, all mechanisms provided by the EU in order to obtain answers about EU legislation and other issues.
Partnerships	We were interested in receiving advice in how to increase an international collaboration network with experts on: taxation, logistics and European Regulation. As well as, other institutions that offer a similar Trade Desk service.
National Public Advocacy	We were interested in receiving advice on policy negotiation procedures with the National Governments in order to reduce the ‘internal trade barriers’.
Public Advocacy in EU	We were interested in finding out about the official mechanism provided by the EU in order to denounce identified trader barriers
Regional Promotion	We were eager to receive ideas on how we could promote our services among Catalan companies and increase awareness of our services.
Training	We were interested in receiving some recommendations about existing programs, courses, webinars... that may help the Trade Desk’s team to improve their knowledge on trade barriers.
Content Manager	We were interested in receiving ideas in terms of existesting Content Manager Programs to improve processes and management information provided.

1.3 PARTICIPATING PEERS

List of Participants
<p>ACCIO</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Alba Lara Elias, Peer Review Coordinator - Cristina Serradell, Director International Trade - Anas Makhmalji, Consultant International Desk - Xavier Requejo, Consultant International Desk - Alicia Blasco, Project Manager Senior, International Desk
<p>Peers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Peter Jaspers, Coordinator Domestic Network and Responsable Enterprise Europe Network at Flanders Investment & Trade. - Steve Samson, Trade Development Manager, Kent County Council. Partner in SIE Project
<p>External Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other Regional Stakeholders to be added
<p>Interreg Europe Programme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ilaria Ramaglioni, Policy Officer
<p>Interreg Europe Policy Learning Platform</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thorsten Kohlisch, Project Manager - Rene Tonnisson, Thematic Expert, SME Competitiveness - Luc Schmerber, Thematic Expert, SME Competitiveness

1.4 POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

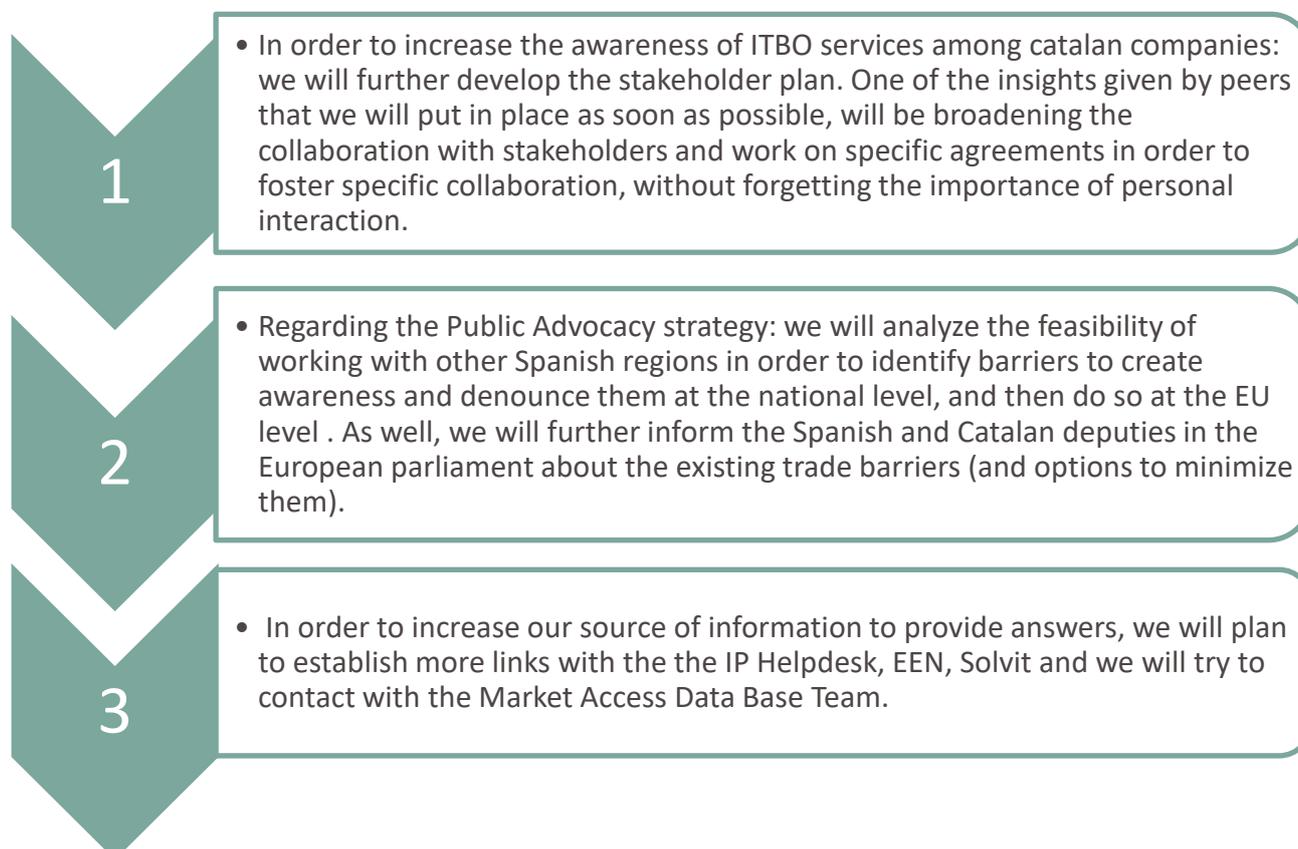
	PEER'S RECOMMENDATIONS
<p>Regional Promotion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common objectives - Build trust with local organizations through collaboration (“create a regional ecosystem” – governance – get formal support from government) • Engage with professional services as multipliers (banks, accountants...) • Engage with industrial federations. Ex: since 2017 FIT has an agreement with 17 federations and other representative

	<p>organisations, through which they pay 50 % of and FTE for supporting internationalization promotion amongst their members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalised agreements foster collaboration • Recommended to have specific persons/faces within the stakeholders – enables personal interaction • Regular collaboration, coordination, meetings and planning fosters trust building among partners (complementarities vs. competition) • Explore opportunities to create win-win situations with current “competitors” (e.g. basic offer delivered by ACCIO opening better business opportunities for partners billing for their services) • Regular meetings from advisors – seminars inviting experts and specialists.
<p>Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of European projects, existing and future ones, including the different strands of Interreg to forge mutually-beneficial European partnerships. • ETPOA network (https://etpoa.eu/contact/) • Reach out to overseas offices of Trade Promotion Organisations/ Embassies + European delegations (connect them with local delegations) • Use of Solvit initiative – now extending to commercial topics • IPR Helpdesk
<p>National Public Advocacy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop local intelligence on trade barriers (e.g. survey like in Kent – SIE website https://www.interregeurope.eu/sie/sie-research-work/) • Government is usually eager to have such data from the ground to inform policy decisions • Use other ACCIO surveys to include questions on trade barriers / maybe also through other stakeholders’ surveys • Present the intelligence to regulators, starting by the technical level as an entry point before going up the chain. • Talk with stakeholders – meet politicians from all sides • Inform political parties (all colors) about trade barriers. • Study visits for politicians – or bring them to fair to get feedback from businesses. Make businesses tell them about trade barriers.
<p>Public Advocacy in EU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Public Advocacy: • Go through federal / national level – MS level. find out if regional / national governments are developing new strategies and present findings from Catalonian businesses to them. • EEN and Solvit offer sometimes opportunities to avoid formal consultations on the national level • Federal government in charge of the follow-up • External Public Advocacy: EU-level, WTO if 2 countries from EU are treated differently

<p>Direct Help form the EU</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market access database • Get in touch with Martin Pilser for tutorials in using Market Access Database.
<p>Training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EU training: contact from Peter: Martin Pilser PO at market access unit • Invite people from Commission / national ministry for Spanish implementation specifics. • Go through EEN Intranet for identifying relevant training opportunities • Take part in vocational training for companies e.g. export management courses... in order to improve internal knowledge of business needs
<p>Content Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on knowledge management systems • E.g. CRM from FIT • Establish contact with Gencat team • Knowledge is still often easier accessible through people

1.5 CONCLUSIONS AND FOLLOW-UP

Envisaged follow-up actions:



Conclusions

To all the peers and experts from the Interreg team who were involved in our peer review, we would like to thank you for sharing your 'know how' experience and good practices, to help us improve the operational process of the Trade Desk. We appreciate your initiative and an attention to detail that you brought to the project. The peer review gave us the opportunity to gain new insights to further the strategic development of the Trade Desk, new ideas to increase the awareness of our services and contributed to new approaches of how to manage Public Advocacy at a national and European level. Therefore, we encourage other organizations to participate in the policy learning platforms, like this peer review, to learn from other regions that share the same goals.

For further information:

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