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Analysis Column







Public and private sector coordination in the international integration of Central American SMEs

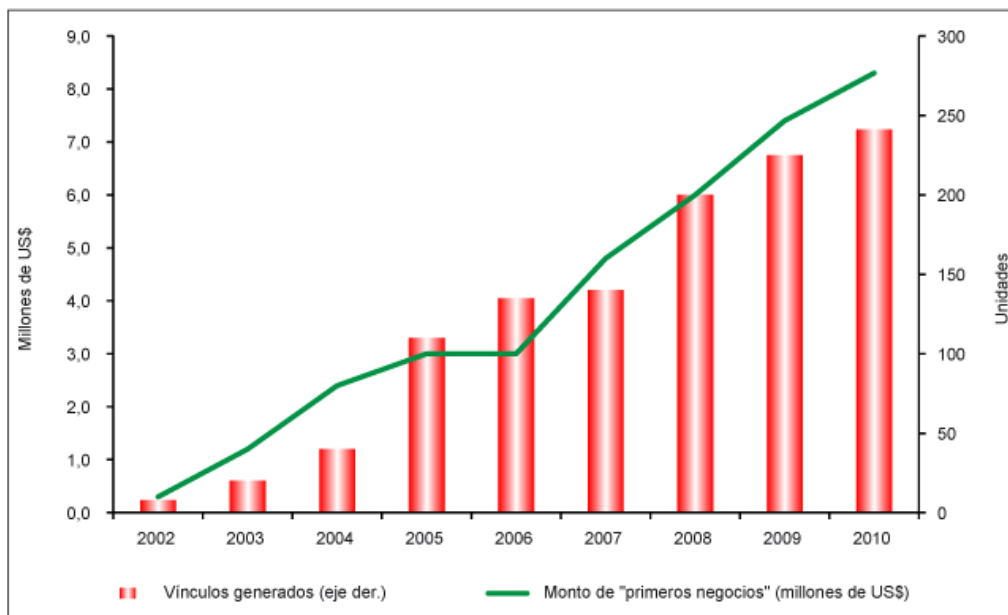
The coordination of the public and private sectors is key when the aim is to promote the internationalization of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). This is clear from the long-term results of a project originally funded by the [Multilateral Investment Fund \(MIF\)](#) of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) in Costa Rica. Implemented between 2002 and 2005, the project sought to strengthen SMEs' capacity to provide goods and services to multinational companies (MNCs) located in export processing zones[1] and thus expand their indirect exports. Costa Rica Foreign Trade Promotion Agency, the Supplier Development Project for High-Technology Multinational Companies (PROCOMER), institutionalized and continued these efforts through [Costa Rica Provee](#).

It is not hard to understand that policies geared to facilitating market access and promoting foreign investment in small economies, or with undiversified productive networks, are inadequate to generate positive spillovers in SMEs. In Central America, this type of company creates more than half the jobs (Martínez Villavicencio, 2006) but, as in the rest of Latin America, only a low percentage of these has export capabilities; and when they do, they have a relatively low share. According to PROCOMER, 80% of exporting companies in Costa Rica last year were SMEs, but their external sales accounted for just 14% of the total (PROCOMER, 2013). The need to encourage SME exports stems from the fact that they play an essential role in diversifying the economy and stimulating competition, as well as developing entrepreneurial skills and the ability to adapt to changes in the context, given their greater flexibility.

As the above project shows, having an organization to coordinate public and private actions helps reduce obstacles and improve capture of the benefits of investment and export development policies. According to PROCOMER, 10 years ago, when the project began, within the group of SMEs with the potential to act as suppliers of MNCs in Costa Rica, the totals for “first business” were close to US\$1 million per year. The latest figures (2010) showed “first business” of slightly over US\$8 million, including around 240 links.

Figure 1: “First business” between SMEs and MNCs in the framework of Costa Rica Provee, 2002-2010

In millions of US\$ and units



Source: Based on PROCOMER data.

SMEs’ links to MNCs clearly multiplied over the course of a decade. Between 2002 and 2010, the accumulated total of “first business” saw purchases of US\$37 million, with 331 SMEs involved in 1,119 links.[2]

SMEs’ technology and management capacity-building and the existence of corporate policies in MNCs promoting local purchases have been central to the program’s success. But so has the important role of *Costa Rica Provee* in the creation of linkages and the promotion of legal reforms that facilitated these links (MIF, 2010).

On their road to insertion in international markets, SMEs face major obstacles, such as limited access to markets and resources – financial, technological, and human – and poor negotiating capacity.

At present, Central American SMEs have new opportunities available to them, due largely to the countries’ active external negotiations reflected in CAFTA-DR, the European Union (EU) agreement, the free trade agreement (FTA) with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA),[3] the unification of the agreements with Mexico into a single FTA, the rapprochement with the Pacific Alliance, and

the development of closer ties with Asian countries.[4] To take advantage of these opportunities for the expansion and diversification of SMEs' exports it is interesting that relevant parts of the public sector are prioritizing plans and programs that provide for coordination actions with the private sector aimed at institutional strengthening. Particular efforts would be made to enhance the efficient operation of organizations providing specialist technical support to SMEs by, for example, developing networks of providers, holding business and investment forums, or training human resources. Such act organizations could act as catalysts for the necessary international linkages of SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Related articles

- IDB-INTAL. "[Challenges and initiatives for SMEs' international insertion in the region](#)," in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 202*, June 2013.

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[1] The project focused on high-tech MNCs.

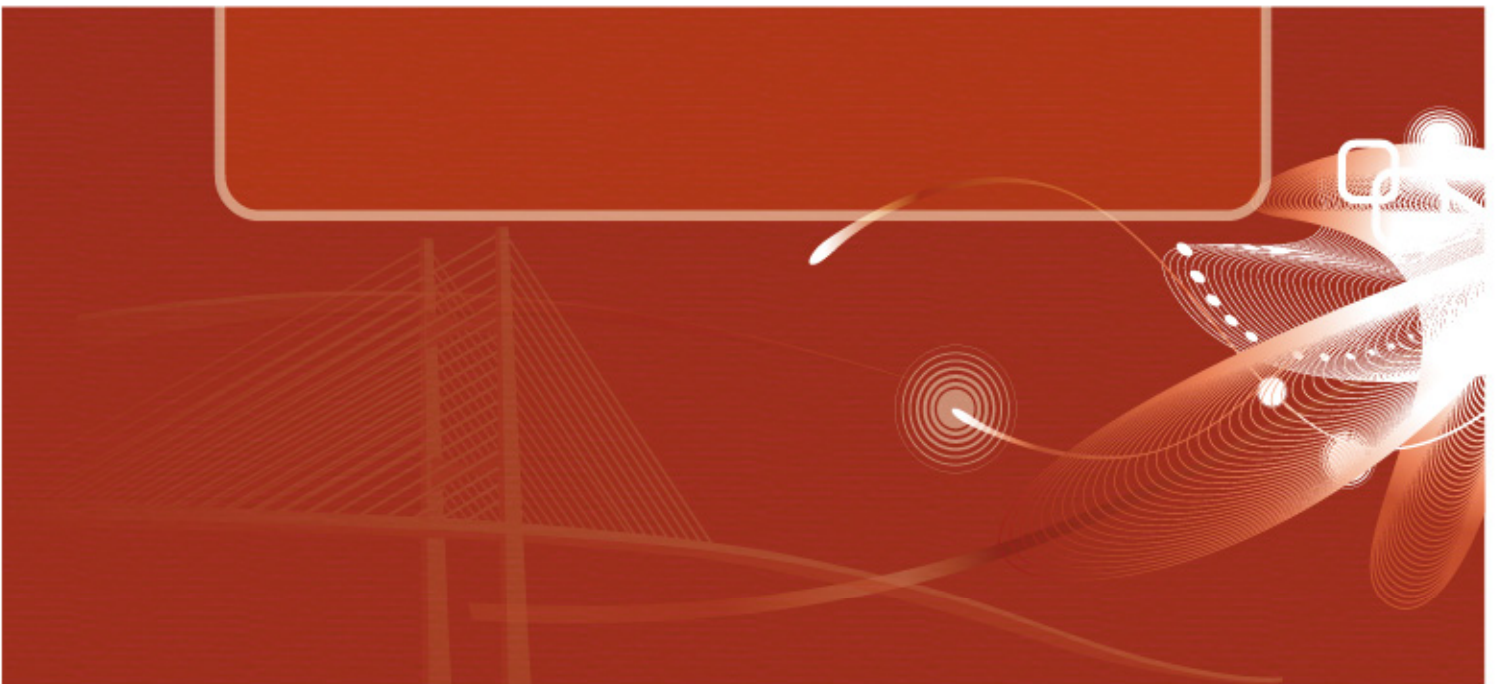
[2] PROCOMER (2011). There is no information available on the total sold to MNCs by this group of SMEs, i.e. the overall repercussions of these links on external sales.

[3] See "Costa Rica and Panama sign FTA with EFTA," in this edition of the *INTAL Monthly Newsletter* ([link](#)).

[4] For more information on the agreements signed by the Central American countries, please see the IDB-INTAL [Legal Instruments of Integration](#) database.



Integration Blocs







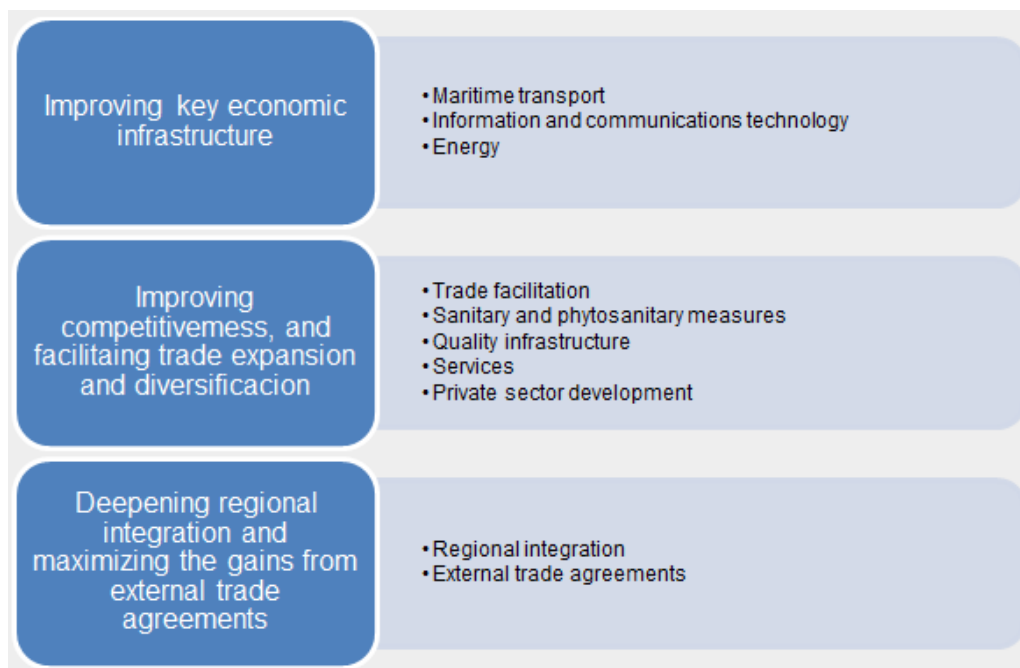
The Caribbean

CARICOM launches Aid for Trade strategy

The [*Caribbean Community Regional Aid for Trade Strategy 2013-2015*](#) was launched in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, June 11, 2013. The document by the [Caribbean Community \(CARICOM\) Secretariat](#) is the result of collaboration with the Integration and Trade Sector of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

The Strategy outlines the region's priorities in terms of Aid for Trade for the next two years. The launch comes at a time when, according to IDB estimates, the region is operating on average 46% below its potential trade. The document draws attention to the influence of certain restrictions present in the Caribbean economies (particularly, the small, vulnerable countries) when it comes to capturing the benefits of trade liberalization. The persistence of these limitations may imply that, thanks to the elimination of barriers, the possibilities open to trade do not translate into greater growth, development, and welfare. The Strategy also draws attention to the effects of the global financial crisis in the region and the implications for port technologies of the expansion of the Panama Canal.

According to the document, the major constraints on the competitiveness of the Caribbean countries lie in the restrictions emanating from its infrastructure and connectivity, low export diversification, institutional weakness, and the low innovative capacity of the private sector. Based on this diagnosis, the Strategy provides a coherent framework of objectives in three areas:



Source: Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat. Caribbean Community Regional Aid for Trade Strategy 2013–2015.

The decision to regionally coordinate the Aid for Trade Strategy can be traced back to 2009, in the framework of the [27th Meeting of the CARICOM Council for Trade and Economic Development \(COTED\)](#). The Strategy was validated at the [Meeting of the IDB's Regional Policy Dialog](#) in November 2012, jointly organized by the Bank's [Integration and Trade Sector](#) and the CARICOM Secretariat's [Country Department Caribbean](#). In February 2013, the CARICOM Heads of Government endorsed the Regional Aid for Trade Strategy,[1] prior to its final approval. Through its Integration and Trade Sector, IDB promotes the implementation of the [Aid for Trade Initiative](#) in Latin America and the Caribbean, promoted by the World Trade Organization (WTO), which aims to support developing countries in strengthening their capabilities with a view to full integration into the global trading system.

More information on IDB's work on Aid for Trade [here](#).

Other links of interest: [\[1\]](#); [\[2\]](#); [\[3\]](#); [\[4\]](#); [\[5\]](#); [\[6\]](#).

[1] IDB-INTAL. "[IDB supports trade expansion and connectivity in the Caribbean](#)," in *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 199*, March 2013.





8th Petrocaribe Summit

The 8th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the [Petrocaribe](#) Energy Agreement was held in Managua, Nicaragua, June 29.

Read the Summit's [Final Declaration](#).

For more information see: IDB-INTAL. "[12th Petrocaribe Summit](#)," in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 201, May 2013*.



Central America

Another step toward energy integration in the Central American Isthmus was taken in June, in the framework of the [Mesoamerica Project](#). Within the [Central American Electrical Interconnection System \(SIEPAC\)](#) the power market was put in operation and the regulations governing it came into force. The SIEPAC covers the development of infrastructure in the form of a power transmission line 1,790km-long that is close to 95% complete, with the Costa Rican section still awaiting completion. The project is estimated to be finished by the end of 2014.

The SIEPAC's objective is to increase the levels of efficiency in supply, expanding the market by allowing the Central American countries to buy and sell their surplus energy and thus bring down costs, creating economies of scale and promoting greater competition among power companies. The region's energy matrix is dominated by thermoelectric sources and hydroelectric dams, and its dependence on petroleum products therefore makes it highly vulnerable to fluctuations in prices and input supply. Moreover, hydroelectric power generation is significant in the subregion, especially in Costa Rica and Panama, and is also a clean energy source, albeit equally vulnerable to climatic variations.

In terms of deepening a regional energy strategy, a ministerial meeting on Mesoamerican energy integration was held at the headquarters of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), June 27-28, attended by SIEPAC members (Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama) and representatives from Belize, Colombia, Mexico, and Dominican Republic.

The event focused on discussing how to increase regional energy interconnection, energy security, and the production of low-carbon energy. In the [Ministerial Declaration about the Progress of Mesoamerican Energy Integration and Trade in Low-Carbon Electricity](#), the countries pledged to continue to promote energy integration, access to sustainable and affordable energy, and to promote the use of renewable energy sources, among other issues. IDB is to collaborate in the search for funding to develop renewable energy projects and clean and efficient technologies in the region. Diversification of the energy matrix, incorporating gas as a source, would lower the risk of irregularities in supply and would, at the same time, help reduce the negative effects of pollution. A working group is, with IDB's support, to consider these aspects; a preliminary report is expected to be available by early 2014.



First semester sees progress in Central American integration

During the 41st Regular Meeting of Heads of State and Government of the countries of the Central American Integration System (SICA) held in San José, Costa Rica, June 27, the Isthmus's representatives reviewed the major developments in regional integration of the first part of the year.

The incorporation of Dominican Republic as a full member of SICA and of Panama in the Central American Economic Integration Subsystem (SIECA) were two of the highlights of the Summit. Of note in [institutional matters](#) were the reforms to SICA, which are aimed at achieving a more orderly, balanced, and equitable rotation of SICA secretariats and bodies among the countries. The restructuring of the Central American Institute of Public Administration (ICAP) was also approved, as was the deployment of an auditing system, transparency, and accountability. In other matters, the administration of Dr. Juan Daniel Alemán Gurdián ended, who had served as [SICA Secretary General](#) since 2009, having succeeded the current Foreign Minister of El Salvador, Hugo Martínez, in the post.

In *economic matters*, the Council of Ministers for Central American Economic Integration (COMIECO) highlighted Panama's accession to the Subsystem. Panama will hold the Pro Tempore Presidency of the Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) in the second semester of 2013. There was also progress in the harmonization of technical regulations and the development of regional regulations, and in the reduction of import duties on inputs in various industries. Last, significant progress was made in implementing the regional commitments undertaken in the framework of the EU-Central America Association Agreement (EU-CAAA), which will come into force August 1, with all countries having met the national requirements and ratifications on time.

[Panama's Six-Month Action Plan](#) will include the monitoring of issues such as its incorporation into the SIECA, the launch of the European Union Central American Association Agreement (EU-CAAA), and the continued harmonization of technical regulations at the regional level. The Action Plan will be implemented in three rounds, to be held in Panama August 19-23, October 7-11, and November 25-29.

To access the documents for the 41st Regular Meeting of Heads of State and Government of SICA countries, please click [here](#).

More information on the results of Costa Rica's *Pro Tempore* Presidency (January-June 2013) in the Central American Economic Integration Subsystem (SIECA) available [here](#).



Costa Rica and Panama sign FTA with EFTA

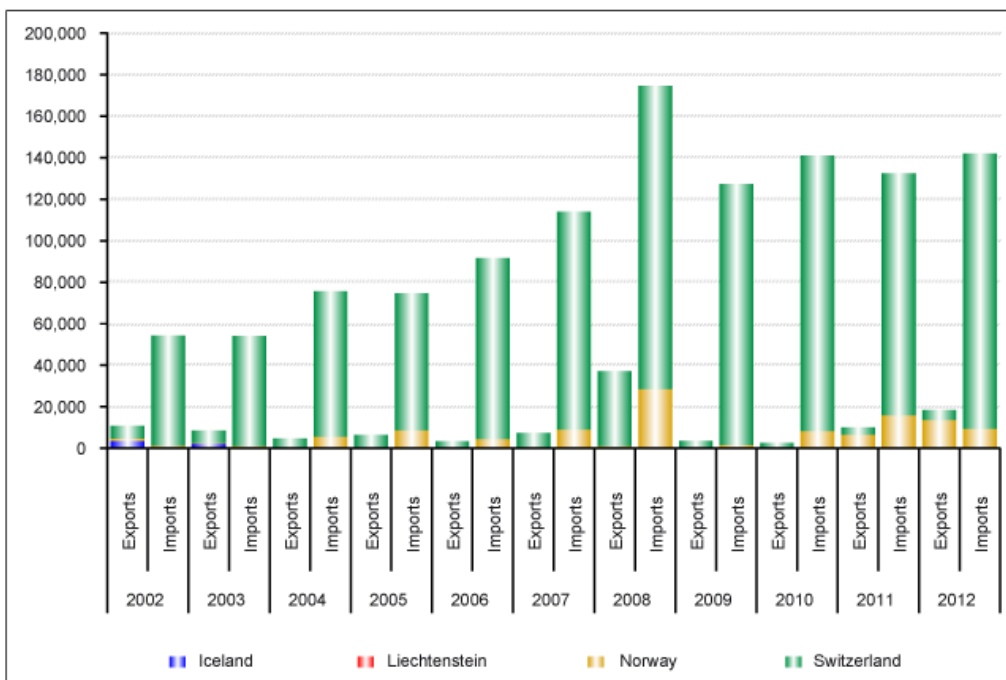
In June, Costa Rica and Panama signed the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiated last year with Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland, members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA).

The negotiations were launched in February 2012 jointly by Costa Rica, Panama, Guatemala, and Honduras, although the treaties will be signed by each country with the European bloc bilaterally. After five rounds, Costa Rica and Panama successfully closed the agreement in December 2012, while the other countries still have issues outstanding.

Costa Rica has granted the EFTA States the same preferences for industrial goods as agreed in the framework of the EU-Central America Association Agreement (EU-CAAA), while some sensitive agricultural goods will keep up special entry conditions. Costa Rican industrial products will enjoy immediate free access to EFTA.

Figure 1: Evolution of Costa Rica's exports and imports with EFTA countries

In thousands of US\$



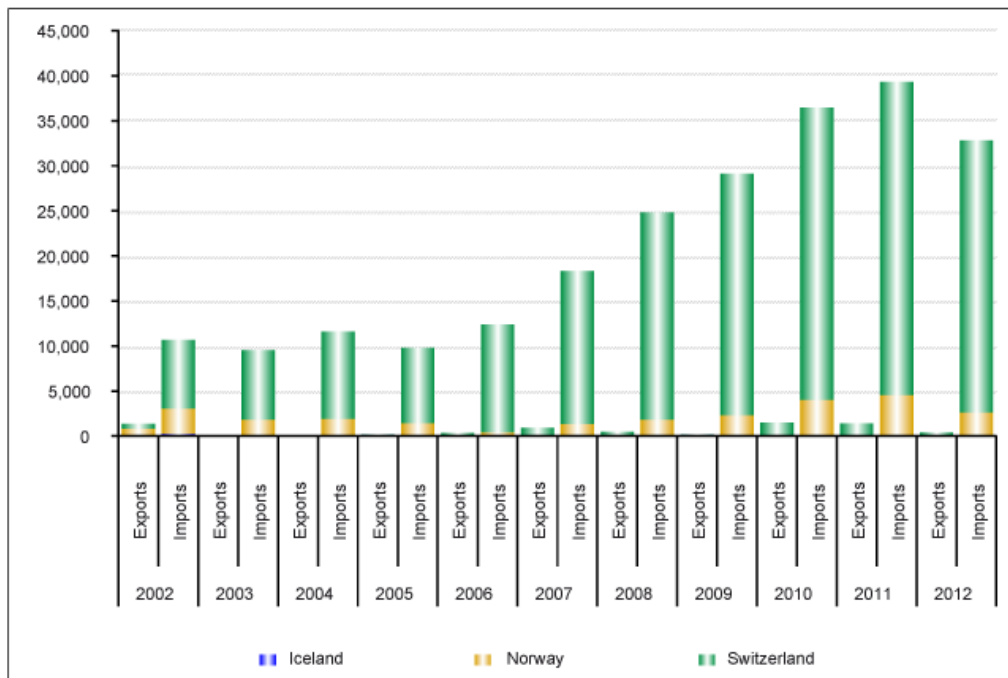
Source: DATAINTAL

Between 2002 and 2012, the trade flow between Costa Rica and EFTA grew, strongly driven by the Central American country's purchases from Switzerland and, to a lesser extent, from Norway. Total imports increased nearly three-fold to US\$141 million in 2012 (Figure 1). Exports, for their part, reached just US\$18 million over the last year, but were double the previous year. Half the shipments consisted of bananas, while coffee and palm oil accounted for 25% and 18% of total sales respectively.

Panama will be able to export seafood and tropical fruits to EFTA tariff-free once the FTA comes into force. Like Costa Rica, Panama has kept up its protection of sensitive agricultural sectors.

Figure 2: Evolution of Panama's exports and imports with EFTA countries


In thousands of US\$



Source: DATAINTAL

Panama's trade with EFTA consists mainly of the Central American economy's imports from Switzerland, which have grown four-fold since 2002 (Figure 2). Exports, however have seen no major variations and are concentrated in cocoa and coffee. To come into force the FTA will have to be approved in the respective countries' parliaments.

More information at the following links:
[Ministry of Foreign Trade of Costa Rica](#)
[Ministry of Trade and Industry of Panama](#)



Related articles

- IDB-INTAL. “[Central America and Panama open talks toward free trade agreement with EFTA](#),” in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 176*, April 2011.
- IDB-INTAL. “[First negotiating round between the EFTA and Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama](#),” in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 187*, March 2012.
- IDB-INTAL. “[Negotiating fronts in Central American external trade talks](#),” in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 190*, June 2012.
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- IDB-INTAL. “[Central America: active efforts in trade](#),” in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 195*, November 2012.
- IDB-INTAL. “[Central America: Fresh progress in trade negotiations](#),” in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 196*, December 2012.



Andean Community

Colombia-Israel FTA negotiations conclude

Negotiations of the free trade agreement (FTA) between Colombia and Israel, concluded, June 10, after five rounds. The [official announcement](#) was made in the framework of the meeting in Jerusalem of Presidents Juan Manuel Santos of Colombia and Shimon Peres of Israel. The next step before the FTA's entry into force is its ratification by the two parliaments, estimated by early next year.

It is a state-of-the-art agreement, its 16 chapters including not just the liberalization of trade in goods, but other items, such as services, investment, public procurement, and cooperation. With this agreement, Colombia expects to increase trade and investment flows with Israel, as well as developing cooperation relations in areas vital to the growth of its economy, such as technology, innovation, and agricultural and industrial development. Also important for Colombia is access to a market with a purchasing power almost four times higher than its own (Table 1).

Table 1: Selected indicators for Colombia and Israel

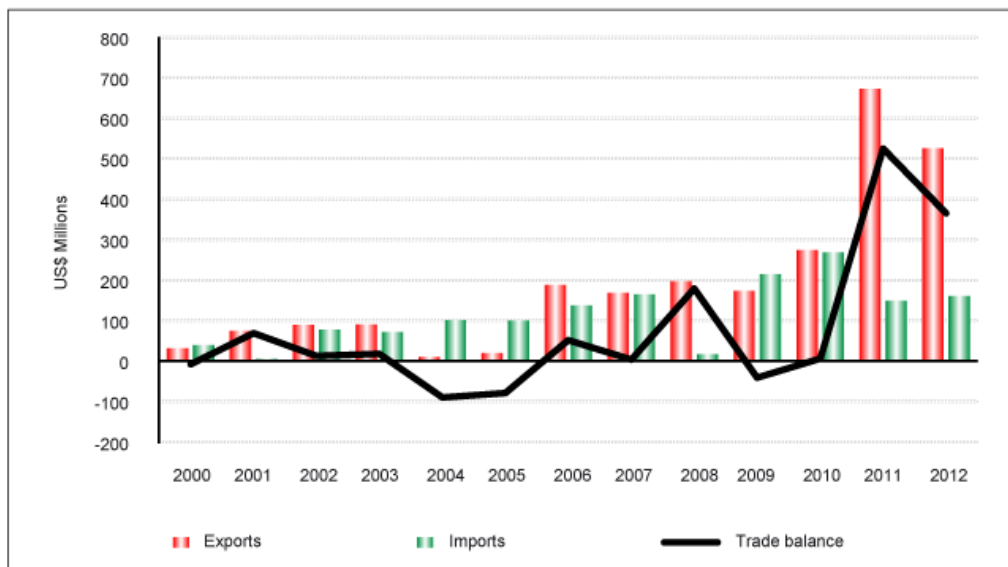
2012

| | Colombia | Israel |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| Surface | 1,141,750km2 | 22,070km2 |
| Population | 47,704 million | 7,908 million |
| Current GDP | US\$366.020 billion | US\$240.894 billion |
| <i>Per capita</i> GDP | US\$7,855 | US\$31,296 |

Source: World Bank and IMF.

Since 2000, total trade has multiplied almost 10-fold (Figure 1). Colombia's trade balance has also been positive for most years.

Figure 1: Colombia's trade with Israel, 2000-2012



Source: DATAINTAL.

Colombia's main export to Israel is coal (94% in 2012), while imports mainly include machinery and equipment (62%), basic chemicals (8%), and textiles (7%). The signing of the FTA with Israel is part of a broad policy over the last few years to internationalize the Colombian economy. This is the first FTA signed with a Middle Eastern country, a region of high purchasing power. Elsewhere in Latin America, Israel has signed agreements with Mexico and MERCOSUR.

Related articles

- IDB-INTAL. "[Colombia and South Korea sign FTA](#)," in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 199*, March 2013.
- IDB-INTAL. "[EU-Colombia/Peru trade agreement signed](#)," in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 191*, July 2012.

Ecuador renounces US tariff preferences

Ecuador [renounced the Andean Trade Promotion and Drug Eradication Act \(ATPDEA\)](#) June 27. Its original expiry date was July 31 and United States' intention to renew it was uncertain. The ATPDEA is a system of preferential tariffs granted unilaterally by United States to the Andean countries. It was implemented in 2002 to replace the Andean Trade Preference Act (ATPA) of 1991, with the aim of promoting the Andean countries' economic development and generating alternatives to narcotics production. The regime allows tariff-free entry to the US market of approximately 6,300 Andean products, including textiles, clothing, footwear, tuna, petroleum and its derivatives, leather goods, etc.

As noted in [INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 183](#), the system was originally designed for Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru. However, in 2008, Bolivia was excluded from the regime for not meeting its drug eradication commitments. In the case of Colombia and Peru, the system was replaced with the entry into force of the respective FTAs with United States.

The Ecuador Foreign Trade Minister, Francisco Rivadeneira, announced that a [Tax Credit Act](#) is being drafted to compensate producers who could be affected by the renunciation of the ATPDEA. This would involve returning the tariffs affecting exports of products to United States that had hitherto been covered by the ATPDEA. The main sectors affected are of tuna, broccoli, and oil exports.

Related articles

- IDB-INTAL. "[ATPDEA renewed](#)," in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 183*, November 2011.
- IDB-INTAL. "[Another year of the ATPDEA for Colombia, Ecuador, and Peru](#)," in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 161*. December 2009.
- IDB-INTAL. "[US tariff preferences to the Andean countries](#)," in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 149*, December 2008.



New CAN Secretary-General

The Foreign and Foreign Trade Ministers of the Andean Community of Nations (CAN) elected the Bolivian, Pablo Guzmán, June 15, as its [new](#) Secretary-General. He will be in office for the next 5 years.



MERCOSUR

45th Common Market Council Summit

The [45th Regular Meeting of the Common Market Council \(CMC\)](#), at which the host country submitted its Pro Tempore Presidency (PPT) Report and Venezuela took on the PPT for the first time, was held in Montevideo, Uruguay, July 12. As usual, the Summit of Heads of State was preceded by the [92nd Regular Meeting of the Common Market Group \(GMC\)](#) and the [20th Extraordinary Meeting of the MERCOSUR Trade Commission \(CCM\)](#).

One of the most important decisions approved by the CMC was the cessation of **Paraguay's** suspension, June 29, 2012. Once the new constitutional government comes into office next August 15, Paraguay will be entitled to fully resume its right to participate in MERCOSUR bodies and decisions.

Regarding the **expansion** of MERCOSUR, the leaders agreed the conditions for Venezuela's integration to the MERCOSUR Family Farming Fund (FAF) and the MERCOSUR Educational Sector Financing Fund (FEM), underlined the progress in the accession process of Bolivia, whose protocol of accession has just been [ratified](#) by the Venezuelan Parliament, and signed a Framework Partnership Agreement with Guyana and another with Suriname. In their new capacity, the two countries can participate as guests at meetings of the bodies in MERCOSUR's institutional structure to discuss topics of common interest, as do Bolivia (currently in the process of accession), Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, and Peru.

In the area of **foreign relations**, the bloc's Foreign Ministers held a meeting with representatives of the Central American Integration System (SICA), while the CMC decided to request MERCOSUR's participation in this organization as an observer. The leaders also gave welcomed the start of the bloc's negotiations with the Eurasian Customs Union (ECU)[1] over the signing of a memorandum of economic and commercial cooperation. The GMC, for its part, review the current status of the negotiations with the European Union (EU), Canada, and India.

Reports by various organs of MERCOSUR were submitted at the CMC Summit, highlighting the most relevant tasks carried out during the first semester of 2013. The Report of the Commission of Permanent MERCOSUR Representatives (CRPM) underlined the main progress related to the **MERCOSUR Structural Convergence Fund (FOCEM)**, including the formation of a Working Group to

begin revising the regulation of the Fund and the eligibility of two new projects submitted by Brazil, [2] subject to technical evaluation.

The Report highlighted the fact that, since it began operating in 2007, FOCEM has received contributions of US\$751 million (84% from regular contributions by the States Parties and 16% from voluntary contributions by Brazil), 60% of which has been disbursed to finance approved projects. To date, 44 projects have been approved for a total of US\$1.4156 billion (70% contributed by FOCEM) to improve road and railway infrastructure, build power transmission lines, strengthen potable water and sanitation systems, promote production chains and microenterprise associativity, control foot and mouth disease, and support vulnerable populations in border regions, among other things. The objective of the FOCEM being to reduce asymmetries, almost two thirds of the resources allocated are for projects in Paraguay and 23.8% in Uruguay. Structural convergence projects account for 86% of the total, followed by social cohesion (6.2%), competitiveness development (4.7 %), and institutional strengthening (0.1%).

The leaders also welcomed the Uruguayan initiative to develop a deep water port and announced that they would consider ways for MERCOSUR to participate in the project.

Among the most important decisions approved by the CMC was the start of activities of the Management Board of the **MERCOSUR Fund for Guarantees to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises**. The fund aims to facilitate access to financing of productive integration projects in which SMEs play a key role and will have a budget of over US\$100 million. The role of SMEs was also raised at the 2nd MERCOSUR Business Forum, July 11, which discussed innovation, advances in science and technology, and competition policies in a three-tier framework: (a) tourism, (b) information and communication technologies, and global services, and (c) industrial and agricultural value chains.

1st Plenary Meeting of the Brazil-Uruguay High Level Group

Brazil and Uruguay continued to forge ahead with the deepening of their bilateral ties. Against this background, the [1st Plenary Meeting of the Brazil-Uruguay High Level Group \(GAN\)](#) was held in Brasilia, Brazil, July 9. First, they adopted a *Brazil-Uruguay Plan of Action for Sustainable Development and Integration*, which identifies six priority areas of work: (a) productive integration, (b) science, technology, and innovation, (c) communication and information, (d) transport infrastructure integration, (e) free movement of goods and services, and (f) free movement of persons. Second, the Foreign Ministers signed an Agreement on Permanent Residence with a view to achieving the free movement of people. And last, they signed an agreement on the simplification of legalization for public documents.

[1] The ECU was formed in 2010 by Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan.

[2] "Implantation and Paving of the Western Beltway - Connection between BR-282 and BR-283 in the Municipality of Chapeco - SC/Brazil", which seeks to improve the road infrastructure in an agroindustrial overland exporting region, and "Complementation for infrastructure of the Itaipu Technological Park in the Iguazú Trinational Region," whose objective is to expand the Technology Park's capacity.

MERCOSUR: Progress in energy integration

The availability, efficiency, and sustainability of energy sources have a direct impact on growth and development, and energy security is therefore a priority on many countries' national and regional agendas.

In Latin America, the prospects for population growth, improved quality of life, and economic expansion over the next few years point to a need to double power generation capacity by 2030.[1] In this context, the [Inter-American Development Bank \(IDB\)](#) plays a key role in expanding coverage and quality of energy services by funding programs to improve efficiency, diversifying the energy matrix through the exploitation of renewable and non-renewable sources, and promoting cross-border integration. Of particular note in this last area is IDB's participation in the [Initiative for the Integration of Regional Infrastructure in South America \(IIRSA\)](#) and the [Mesoamerica Project](#). MERCOSUR is no exception to these global trends. As two major hydrocarbons producers, the recent accession of Venezuela and the potential future incorporation of Bolivia are of great importance in energy terms. Energy trading among these countries has certainly gained relevance, [2] notably the dynamism of Argentine and Brazilian gas purchases from Bolivia (which saw a respective 605- and 12.6-fold increase between 2002 and 2012)[3] and of electrical energy from Paraguay (up 88.1% and 56.4% respectively over the same period).[4] It should be noted that the energy trading deficit of Uruguay and MERCOSUR's two largest economies has risen in the last decade, while Paraguay, Venezuela, and Bolivia have seen significant positive balances, driven respectively by electricity, oil, and gas exports.

The bloc's founding countries are actively promoting energy integration with Venezuela, though energy trading with this country is still not significant. Along these lines, the State-owned oil companies in Argentina and Venezuela, Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales (YPF) and Petróleos de Venezuela S.A. (PDVSA), recently signed a memorandum of understanding for strategic cooperation in joint projects in the two countries' hydrocarbons value chains.

Energy security (understood as the uninterrupted availability of energy sources at affordable prices) is a top priority if the goal of sustainable growth in MERCOSUR countries is to be achieved. Therefore, efforts to develop renewable energy sources are crucial and have great potential in MERCOSUR countries. Major initiatives are being developed in many cases. For example, the relevance of hydroelectric energy among the bloc's founding members has been notable, as has the growth of wind power generating capacity in Brazil, geothermal projects in Argentina, and the development of biomass energy in MERCOSUR's two largest economies (Vergara et al., 2013). It should be remembered that trade in energy is closely related to the development of transnational infrastructure, which is a public good generating externalities that can affect not only the countries involved but third parties as well. Since it involves two or more States, this type of project also presents specific coordination difficulties, linked to respect for sovereign principles, regulatory differences, political sensitivity, and economic uncertainties, among other relevant aspects. These dimensions explain why the level of Latin American countries' transnational infrastructure is suboptimal. Initiatives like IIRSA and the Mesoamerica Project have a key role to play (Beato, 2008).

It should also be remembered that, while there is great potential for energy integration, and there

has been progress in this area, its exploitation requires the construction of an adequate legal framework, particularly in the area of dispute settlement (Ruiz-Caro, 2010). The experience of some MERCOSUR countries has shown that contingencies in international energy exchange contracts supported by infrastructure have not been sufficiently taken into account. This highlights the need to improve the design of contracts regulating the participation of the private sector while also deepening the coordination of public policies (Navajas, 2008).

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- IDB-INTAL. "Electrical Interconnection and diversification of Central American energy grid," in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 203*, July 2013.
- IDB-INTAL. "[Integración eléctrica en América Latina: antecedentes, realidades y caminos por recorrer](#)," (book review) in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 201*, May 2013.
- IDB-INTAL. "[Mesoamerica Project: electrical interconnections](#)," in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 178*, June 2011.
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[1] Yepes-García et al. (2010) in Vergara et al. (2013).

[2] The upcoming edition of *The MERCOSUR Report* will provide a detailed overview of energy trade in MERCOSUR.

[3] Source: DATAINTAL.

[4] Source: Central Bank of Paraguay.



Trade issues relevant to MERCOSUR countries

Negotiations ongoing between Paraguay and Mexico

The Technical Group held a [meeting](#) in June toward the signing of an economic complementation agreement (ECA) between the two countries to replace Partial Scope Agreement No. 38 (PSA-38). The meeting moved forward in the negotiations on rules of origin and customs procedures. It should be remembered that [ECA-54](#) acts as a framework agreement for the realization of a free trade area between MERCOSUR and Mexico. To date, Uruguay is the only bloc member to have a [free trade agreement \(FTA\)](#) in place with Mexico.

Brazil lowers tariffs to promote investment


In order to promote investment, technological innovation, and employment, Brazil has decided to cut its import tariff on 193 [capital goods \(BK\)](#) and 11 [computing and telecommunications goods \(BIT\)](#) not produced in Brazil from between 14% and 16%, to 2%. The reduced aliquot will be in effect until the end of 2014, and will be part of the ex-tariff regime, which allows a temporary lowering of duties on BK and BIT imports not produced locally.

First meeting of the Brazil-Paraguay RTU Monitoring Commission

The [first meeting of the Monitoring Committee for the Unified Tax Regime \(RTU\)](#), which regulates Brazilian imports from Paraguay overland, was held at the end of June. It looked at the results of the [creation](#) of the regime in 2009. The RTU enables Brazilian microenterprises to import certain goods originating in Paraguay under a simplified tax regime, and so far there have been 769 Brazilian microenterprises and 30 Paraguayan exporters. Over the last twelve months, the most heavily traded products were cell phones, digital processing machines, electric amplifiers, and broadcasting equipment for automobiles.

China approves transgenic varieties imports benefiting MERCOSUR countries

China has [adopted](#) biosafety certification for the import of three varieties of transgenic soybean and corn. These guarantees are necessary for these new, higher performance varieties to enter the Asian country. This is of special relevance to MERCOSUR agricultural producers, who will be allowed to sow these seeds in next season.



Related articles

- IDB-INTAL. “[Key aspects of MERCOSUR countries’ external links](#),” in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 201*, May 2013.
- IDB-INTAL. “[Trade measures stepped up in MERCOSUR](#),” in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 190*, June 2012.

First operational meeting of the Bank of the South

The first meeting of the Council of Ministers of the [Bank of the South](#) was held in Caracas, Venezuela, June 12, attended by Foreign and Finance Ministers, and other government representatives from Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Uruguay, and by Brazil as an observer, which has not yet ratified the Articles of Agreement. The meeting covered issues essential for the Bank to start operations, such as regulation, the timetable for countries' initial capital contributions, organs of government, and main strategic guidelines.

As stated in its [Articles of Agreement](#)[1] the Bank of the South aims to finance economic, social, and environmental development, strengthen integration, reduce asymmetries, and promote equitable distribution of investments among its Member Countries. The document also states that it will have maximum authorized capital[2] of US\$20 billion and an initial US\$7 billion contribution from the partners. The Bank will be based in Caracas, with two regional offices in La Paz, Bolivia, and Buenos Aires, Argentina.



Related articles

- IDB-INTAL. [“Progress in institutionalization of UNASUR and Bank of the South,”](#) in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 182*, October 2011.
- IDB- INTAL. [“Agreement establishing the Bank of the South,”](#) in: *INTAL Monthly Newsletter No. 158*, September 2009.

[1] The Articles of Agreement establishing the Bank of the South were signed on September 26, 2009 and came into force on April 3, 2013 with the ratification of five of its founding members: Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Ratification by Brazil and Paraguay is still pending. Paraguay has been temporarily suspended from UNASUR after President Lugo was ousted in 2012.

[2] In a civil society, the authorized capital is the maximum amount of capital the Bank can hold. If this is to be changed, there must be a reform of the Bank’s statute. The partners underwrite part of the total capital authorized, which may constitute the total authorized capital or part of it.





Regional And Global Overview







Trade issues affecting Latin American countries in the WTO

[Members welcome Costa Rica's decision to bring its rice subsidies within agreed limits](#)

Costa Rica is to eliminate the price support mechanism for rice as of 2014, in order to comply with the commitments made in the scope of the WTO. This issue has under discussion since 2009, when consultations with Costa Rica were first requested.

[Panama files dispute against Colombia on textiles measures](#)

The request for consultations arises from a tariff applied by the Colombia on the textiles, apparel, and footwear imports from Panama.

[Australia launches safeguard investigation on processed fruit](#)

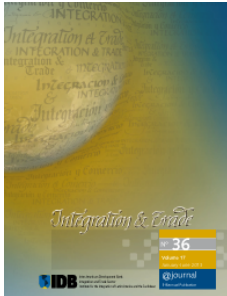
The objective is to determine whether imports are damaging domestic industry. Argentina, Brazil, and Chile are among the supplier countries.



Integration & Trade Sector







Integration & Trade Journal N° 36 (January-June 2013)

South-South and Triangular Cooperation in LAC

“...South-South cooperation, rather than being much ado about nothing, is actually tangible and about more than meets the eye, reflecting new avenues of delivery, innovative ways of thinking, and ongoing economic realignment.” (Introduction. Shearer and Tres, 2013).

Featured contributions about:

- The role of institutions in the provision of public goods and their implications for sustainable development.
- SSC, and its increasing contribution to international dialogue.
- The rising profile and implications of SSC between LAC and China, Japan, and Korea.
- The role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in defining, implementing, and evaluating SSC interventions in the region.
- Comparisons between SSC providers and traditional donors, including a greater focus on the private sector.
- Case studies.

Click [here](#) to access *Integration & Trade Journal 36*.



Integration & Trade Journal 37 Call for Papers

Integration & Trade Journal is now accepting submissions of papers examining the patterns and determinants of the internationalization of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC).

Both theoretical and empirical contributions will be considered, but in all cases priority will be given to papers identifying and shedding light on relevant policy questions ([link](#)), including case studies of policies followed by national or international organizations, in particular. Furthermore, submission of papers that explicitly contrast successful and failed cases while comparing countries within the region will be specially considered. Important lessons are expected to be drawn from these contributions for Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The closing date for submissions is **October 15th, 2013**.

Papers should be sent to intintajournal@iadb.org.

The works selected by the Editorial Committee will be published in Issue 37 of the *Integration & Trade Journal* in **December 2013**.

[Click here](#) to see the guidelines.



Panamá lanza nueva ventanilla única de comercio con apoyo del BID (only in Spanish)

El Ministerio de Comercio e Industrias de Panamá con el apoyo del Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID) lanzaron la Ventanilla Única de Comercio Exterior que agilizará las transacciones comerciales, reducirá costos y contribuirá a la competitividad de las empresas panameñas ([link](#)) .



IDB issues Call for Proposals to promote Regional Public Goods in Latin America and the Caribbean

The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has launched the 2013 Call for Proposals of the Initiative for the Promotion of Regional Public Goods in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC). The Initiative is based on the premise that the countries of the region share challenges or opportunities for development that can be addressed or seized upon more effectively and efficiently by means of regional cooperation ([link](#)).



Other IDB Activities







How can Latin America and the Caribbean tap their renewable energy potential and foster sustainable development?

At the invitation of Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos, Prime Minister of Denmark Helle Thorning-Schmidt, and Inter-American Development Bank President Luis Alberto Moreno top leaders from government, business, finance, civil society and, international organizations will convene at the first regional dialogue in Latin America of the Global Green Growth Forum (3GF LAC), to be held in Bogotá, Colombia, on June 18 ([link](#)).





INTAL Documentation Center








Reviews

Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Latin American Economic Outlook 2013: SME Policies for Structural Change. Washington: OECD; ECLAC, 2012.

The main objective of this publication is to propose policies geared to raising the productivity and competitiveness of Latin American small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs); they are also seen as potential generators of good-quality jobs.

The research underlines the difficult access and high cost of long-term financing, inadequate access to information and communication technologies (ICTs), and the lack of human capital, from which SMEs suffer. To overcome these obstacles, the Report suggests taking four factors into consideration: first, a focus on the productive chains in which SMEs are inserted, establishing links with other companies, in order to achieve economies of scale or the necessary specialization, and so bring down programs' operating costs. Second, it contends that there is a need for a meaningful coordination of sectoral policies, including infrastructure policy and the provision of services in order to remove the bottlenecks affecting the productive development of the SMEs. Third, the study suggests the need for greater vertical coordination with local and regional actors at the subnational level. Last, given the long maturation period, it argues that policies must have specific objectives sustained over time.

The first chapter provides a short-term macroeconomic overview for Latin America, indicating the main weaknesses of some countries in an international context characterized by uncertainty. The second chapter provides a description of SMEs in the region, the main feature of which is their heterogeneity, from those that meet the needs of self-employment (sometimes in situations of informality) to others capable of exploiting market opportunities through efficient, innovative business management. The work points out that these production units are a fundamental component of the region's productive structure, representing almost the total number of companies, and employing two-thirds of workers. Yet their contribution to GDP is relatively low (70% of regional GDP comes from large firms), which reveals deficiencies in their productivity. Their share of exports is small: less than 5% in most countries. The research attributes these shortfalls in productivity and export capabilities to the high structural heterogeneity of the region's



economies. The policies pursued by Latin American governments and the institutional structure responsible for promoting SMEs according to each country's regulatory framework are also evaluated.

The third chapter deals with the problems of financing for SMEs in Latin America. They receive less than 15% of total credit due to problems of asymmetry and lack of information, lack of collateral, complex bureaucratic requirements, and so on. This forces them to rely on self-financing and resources from suppliers. The study argues that public financial institutions have historically played an important role through instruments such as the provision of guarantees, subsidized credit lines, and others tailored to the needs of SMEs. On the other hand, the private banks have concentrated on financing larger corporations.

The fourth chapter focuses on the factors that determine SMEs capacity to innovate and incorporate new technologies in their production activities. The work points out that a critical factor for the productive use of ICTs is the availability and quality of fixed broadband. Lower broadband penetration and higher costs in the region mean that SMEs ability to access is below that of other more developed regions. Moreover, it can be seen that the lower adoption of ICTs in Latin American SMEs compared to other regions is in part due to ignorance of these technologies' benefits for business and to financial reasons: the high cost of the computer programs and equipment is still an obstacle, in addition to demanding investment in technical training for its use. It is emphasized that SMEs introduce less far-reaching innovations compared to larger companies, with innovation concentrating on the acquisition of machinery and equipment. SMEs geared to the international market have a greater capacity to innovate, particularly when they are located in sectors dominated by dynamic efficiencies (with greater rises in productivity than the rest of the economy). Accordingly, access to international markets promotes progress in technological skills and improvements to companies' organizational and commercial models.

The fifth chapter focuses on the problems associated with human capital and professionals skills in the region, which poses a significant barrier to increased productivity. The research emphasizes the important disconnect that exists between the skills required by the production sector and the training provided by the education system. The document proposes promoting dialog among workers, management, and trainers in order to understand the characteristics of supply and demand, and thus promote the coordination of skills with the world of work.

Chapter six is an overview of associative experiences in the region geared to the promotion of clusters, business networks, and territorial programs, and to SMEs' participation in global value chains. It is argued that Latin American SMEs' level of internationalization is lower than in other regions. It is claimed that to overcome backwardness in production and exports, production coordination policies are needed to boost interactions and links among companies and institutions, such as networks, clusters, supplier development, global value chains, etc. It is essential to exploit positive externalities in the same sector, and the territory as a place of interaction among development agents.

In summary, the publication describes in an orderly and precise way the problems of Latin American SMEs, citing examples of programs implemented in the various different countries. Aimed mainly at policy makers, it also is useful in the academic field and for international agencies linked to this area. It provides statistics of these production units, based on national sources and multilateral organizations. The publication's value lies in its assessment of the programs undertaken in the region and its suggestions for improvements.



Bibliographic alert

This weekly alert disseminates information on the highlighted documents recently uploaded in the INTAL Documentation Center Data Base (CDI). It also provides links to open access bulletins and journals in Spanish, Portuguese and English. Click [here](#).

Monthly Highlights

*El Futuro del Comercio : Los Retos de la Convergencia. Edición:Ginebra: OMC, 24 de abril de 2013 [60 p.]



El Futuro del Comercio : Los Retos de la Convergencia.
Edición:Ginebra: OMC, 24 de abril de 2013 [60 p.]


Título:El Futuro del Comercio : Los Retos de la Convergencia

Edición:Ginebra: OMC, 24 de abril de 2013 [60 p.]

ISBN:978-92-870-3878-4

Temas:<COMERCIO INTERNACIONAL><MERCADO DE TRABAJO><INVERSIONES><GLOBALIZACION><TECNOLOGIA><ACUERDOS PREFERENCIALES DE COMERCIO><ORGANIZACION MUNDIAL DEL COMERCIO, OMC>

Resumen: En abril de 2012, el Director General de la OMC, Pascal Lamy, invitó a un grupo de destacadas personalidades de colectivos no estatales a analizar los retos que plantea la apertura del comercio mundial en el siglo XXI. El Grupo de Reflexión celebró varias reuniones privadas y mantuvo amplias consultas con diversas partes interesadas. En el capítulo 1 del informe del Grupo de Reflexión se analiza la contribución que ha hecho la apertura del comercio al crecimiento, el desarrollo y la prosperidad. Se analizan también los retos asociados a la gestión de un crecimiento sin empleo, un desempleo elevado, la pobreza, la desigualdad, el medio ambiente y el desarrollo sostenible, así como la función del comercio y la inversión en este contexto. En el capítulo 2 se examinan algunos factores de transformación que han configurado el comercio en los últimos años y que seguirán haciéndolo en el futuro. Entre ellos cabe



mencionar la creciente globalización, el desplazamiento geográfico del crecimiento, el comercio y la inversión, los avances tecnológicos, el auge de las cadenas de valor internacionales, la proliferación de acuerdos comerciales preferenciales y la influencia cada vez mayor de las medidas no arancelarias. El capítulo 3 contiene recomendaciones sobre las medidas que podrían adoptarse. El Grupo de Reflexión no las ha ordenado por grado de importancia, sino siguiendo el análisis de los principios y procesos que impulsan las relaciones comerciales y el de una serie de cuestiones concretas que se han planteado en otros contextos como la Ronda de Doha o que, a juicio del Grupo, merecen ser examinadas. El Grupo no presenta recomendaciones específicas sobre la manera de afrontar la Ronda de Doha y se limita a señalar que las cuestiones que conforman el programa de Doha no van a desaparecer y que el incumplimiento de este compromiso colectivo podría poner en peligro el propio sistema multilateral de comercio.

Nota general: El Grupo de Reflexión sobre el Futuro del Comercio - convocado por el Director General de la OMC Pascal Lamy- se reunió tres veces, en mayo y septiembre de 2012 y enero de 2013, y celebró consultas y debates con diversas partes interesadas. Las reuniones tuvieron lugar en Beijing, Singapur, Ginebra, Nueva Delhi y Ammán.

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Resumen 3

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- El comercio puede contribuir a crear mayor igualdad [p. 13]
- Comercio, empleo y desigualdad: hacer realidad las oportunidades [p. 14]
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Accesos al documento: E 339.1 / OMC-FUT / 2013

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*Sorj, B., coord. y Fausto, S., coord. (2013). O Brasil e a Governança da América Latina : Que Tipo de Liderança é Possível?. Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Instituto Fernando Henrique Cardoso, IFHC.



Sorj, B., coord. y Fausto, S., coord. (2013). O Brasil e a Governança da América Latina : Que Tipo de Liderança é Possível?. Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Instituto Fernando Henrique Cardoso, IFHC.

Autor:Sorj, Bernardo, coord.; Fausto, Sergio, coord.

Título:O Brasil e a Governança da América Latina : Que Tipo de Liderança é Possível?

Edición:Rio de Janeiro: Fundação Instituto Fernando Henrique Cardoso, IFHC, Maio 2013 [333 p.]


Geográficos:<AMERICA LATINA><BRASIL>

Resumen:Este conjunto de artigos busca avançar na análise do papel do Brasil na construção de uma governança regional no contexto de profundas mudanças na economia e na geopolítica internacional. Com o fim da Guerra Fria, a influência dos Estados Unidos na região se reduziu em intensidade e se modificou em sua natureza. As elites aumentaram sua margem de autonomia frente aos condicionantes geopolíticos internacionais e a atuação dos Estados Unidos passou a ser menos intrusiva nos assuntos políticos domésticos e mais voltada a temas como comércio e investimento, assinando tratados de livre comércio com vários países. Por sua vez, novos atores externos passaram a ter incidência na América do Sul, sendo a China o caso mais notório...

Nota de contenido:

Introdução: O papel do Brasil na governança regional / Sorj, Bernardo; Fausto, Sergio.

Capítulo I: Brasil: ator geopolítico regional e global / Sorj, Bernardo; Fausto, Sergio.



Capítulo II: A América do Sul na agenda brasileira de comércio e investimentos: condicionantes e atores / Motta Veiga, Pedro da; Polónia Rios, Sandra.

Capítulo III: Energia Elétrica - aproveitamento de complementaridades entre países da América do Sul / Kelman, Jerson; Gama, Sinval Zaidan.

Capítulo IV: Da IIRSA ao COSIPLAN: desafios da integração física da América do Sul / Tavares de Araújo Jr., José.

Capítulo V: A presença da China na América Latina e suas implicações para o Brasil / Nedal, Dani K.

Capítulo VI: Securing the border: Brazil's "South American First".

· Approach to Transnational Organized Crime / Muggah, Robert.

Capítulo VII: A Ação Regional Brasileira sob as ópticas da Diplomacia e da Defesa: Continuidades e Convergências / Costa Vaz, Alcides.

Capítulo VIII: A liderança do Brasil na América do Sul 2002-2012 / Guilhaon Albuquerque, José Augusto.

Capítulo IX: Brasil e América Latina: olhares cruzados / Sorj, Bernardo; Fausto, Sergio.

Accesos al documento:E 332.135 / SOR-BRA / 2013

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Versión en Español ([texto completo](#)). Si no pudo acceder haga click [aqui](#).

*Comunidad Andina, CAN. (2013). Dimensión Económica Comercial de la Comunidad Andina. Lima: CAN.



Comunidad Andina, CAN. (2013). Dimensión Económica Comercial de la Comunidad Andina. Lima: CAN.

Autor inst.:Comunidad Andina, CAN

Título:Dimensión Económica Comercial de la Comunidad Andina

Edición:Lima: CAN, Mayo de 2013 [41 p.]

Temas:<COMUNIDAD ANDINA, CAN><GRUPO ANDINO><COMERCIO INTRARREGIONAL><MERCADO DE PRODUCTOS MANUFACTURADOS><INTEGRACION REGIONAL><INTEGRACION COMERCIAL><RELACIONES COMERCIALES>

Geográficos:<REGION ANDINA>

Resumen: El documento incluye, además, una breve descripción del comercio exterior de los países de la Comunidad Andina en los últimos diez años, donde se puede observar la importancia que tiene el comercio intrarregional como el principal destino de productos manufacturados, así como su capacidad para potenciar las exportaciones de pequeñas y medianas empresas al mundo. Dicha importancia se ha traducido en acciones como la reactivación del Comité Andino de Autoridades de Promoción Comercial, con la finalidad de profundizar los lazos comerciales entre los Países Miembros y proyectarse a terceros países. Se espera que este documento motive el interés no sólo entre los actores del proceso de integración sino también de empresarios, investigadores y ciudadanos por ahondar su conocimiento sobre la Comunidad Andina.

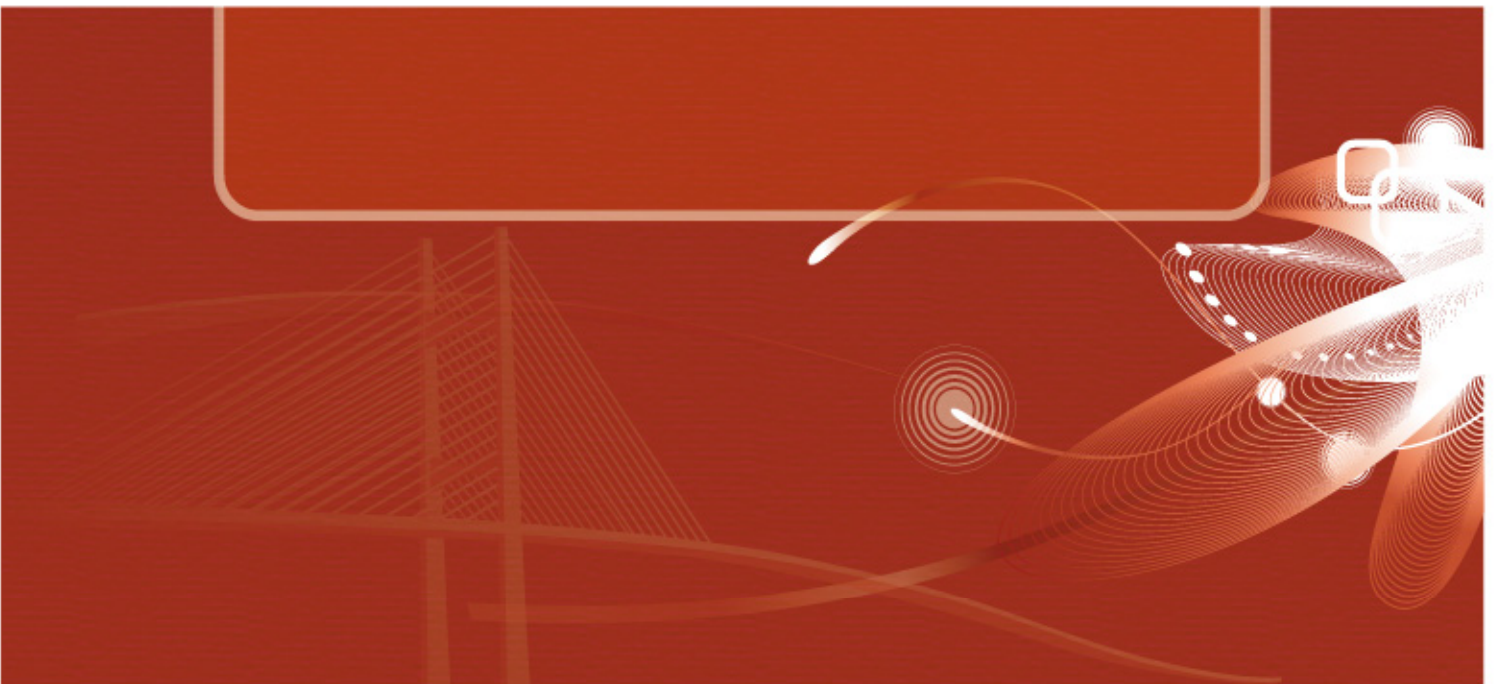
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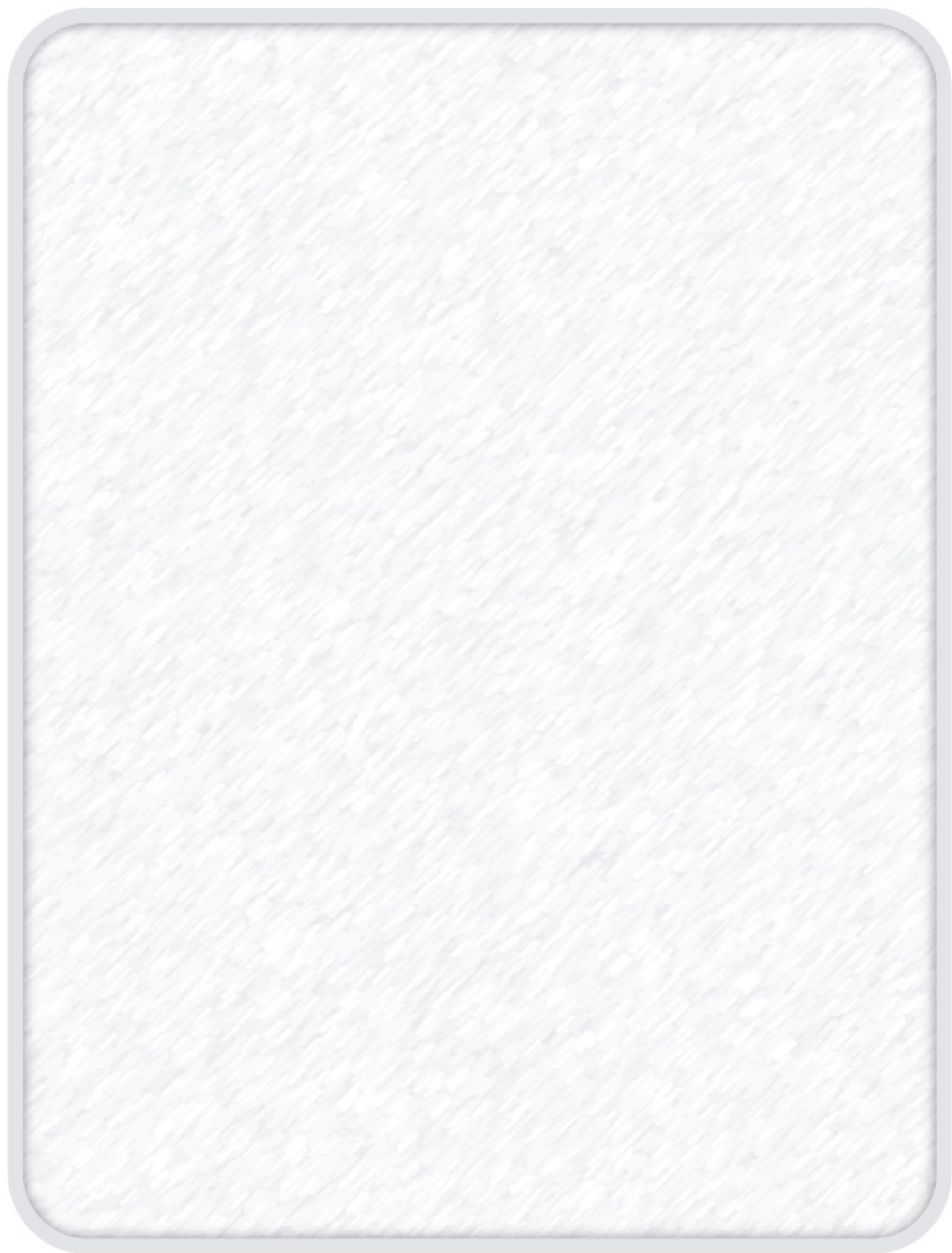
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