ABSTRACT

Institutional Framework for Export Competitiveness:
The Case of Trinidad and Tobago

Gloria Christina Baksh

Export competitiveness is a critical factor in international trade. It is a factor which determines a country's survival in today's hostile international trading environment.

The growing complexities of the world trading system present an ever-increasing challenge for participants to become more export-efficient. For export-dependent economies, the challenge is greater.

Export competitiveness and export efficiency are general concerns of this study which is premised on the fact that a country like Trinidad and Tobago must export in order to survive.

From a general standpoint the author examines critical aspects of export policy. More specifically, a case study of Trinidad and Tobago is undertaken. The author addresses the issues of export competitiveness and export efficiency for Trinidad and Tobago in particular, and from the perspective of institution-building. The focus of the study is on the institutional framework for export competitiveness.

A principal objective of the study therefore, is to examine the country's present economic and social structures and the changes required for the achievement of export efficiency and ultimately export success.
Following an indepth analysis and evaluation of the existing institutional economic and social framework, the author concludes that there are definite and serious gaps in this country's present institutional framework.

Broad policy guidelines are put forward as the author attempts to provide some general policy recommendations on the subject of export efficiency for Trinidad and Tobago.

Dr. Trevor Farrell. Dr. Farrell is largely responsible for my decision to complete the Master of Science degree in Economics. Without Dr. Farrell's advice and enthusiasm, this thesis would not have become a reality today. I am eternally grateful to Dr. Farrell for his words of advice but, I especially thank him for his vote of confidence in me.

Like all Dr. Farrell's students before me, I must acknowledge his commitment to serious research and his insistence upon excellence. His ideas, expert guidance, meticulous supervision and insistence upon excellence all contributed to major improvements in the quality of this thesis. Any credits one may wish to extend must therefore be shared by Dr. Farrell. I hold myself fully responsible and do apologize now, for any remaining flaws in this work. I also thank Dr. Farrell for his welcome words of encouragement when they were most needed.

The completion of a major part of this study depended upon the participation of members of the business community as well as that of a number of government officials. Much of the analysis in the latter half of this work was based upon the research findings of a survey conducted with selected business firms, and the relevant government institutions. I thank all those who took the time to respond either by way of the mailed questionnaires or through the interviews conducted.