South Africa/Maine Synergies and Opportunities

The exercise is based on the thought that S. Africa and Maine have potential economic growth synergies and that clusters in each economy should be examined to find and develop those growth relationships.

A wide array of topics from previous discussion, remain on the table for triage. In broad areas the topics range from business interests of specific companies in Maine and S. Africa, through specific economic development clusters, human resource development, and cultural and educational exchange.

It was suggested that four methods of operation, in terms of the planning work, should be foremost in the process: 1) compression of time to reach tangible project work; 2) desire to work with a limited number of business sectors; 3) consonance of needs and opportunities; 4) project identification that can be categorized in short, medium, and long-term efforts.

Business Sectors were identified in both economies from existing studies done by governmental and non-governmental organizations. A series of triage exercises based on time-to-possible-implementation, areas of overlap in terms of basic support needs for cluster growth, and consonance within both economies were used to reduce the list to a 10 to 15 category list and those categories were further reduced to three that appear to be a match to criteria and suitable for further feasibility study.

These categories were: automotive parts, clothing and textiles, and information technology. Further brief review of sub-sectors developed an outline of topic areas that have relevance for further examination. In addition it was suggested that the sectors require a background of support in education/human resource development, technology transfer, and, perhaps, assistance in the development of community finance options and equity investment vehicles.

It was also agreed that assistance and facilitation in developing high velocity business relationships that allow small firms to access available assistance and partners should move ahead immediately, regardless of the sector, or position in the developed plan. Currently companies in Maine have invested in, or are examining business options in areas from automotive parts, environmental engineering, resource mapping, radio frequency technologies, and development of business assistance mechanisms. Among areas that consul staff wished to remain in active file are retail sales opportunities for S. African products, and tourism.

The three sectors chosen for in depth examination are: automotive parts, information technology, and clothing and textiles. The work of the studies will develop several levels of data pertinent to understanding the marketplace. Prefeasibility work will be an examination of the immediate viability of companies in

both economies coming together with something meaningful to say to each other. For Maine the real question is can the scale of the economy have real and meaningful partnerships with S. Africa in these three industries. If pre-feasibility seems positive then an extended feasibility study with financial, technical, and market analyses will be completed as basis for further development of a working relationship. Prior to that point there may be meaningful reason to bring companies together both here and in S. Africa for discussion, test of viability of relations, and first steps in an ongoing process.

The pre-feasibility must resolve several questions, not the least of which is global restructuring in two of the sectors, as well as high cost of market entry for competitors at either end of the trade link. Clearly, the sector most amenable to discussion and further development is information technology. Costs of entry are low, market entry is often accomplished on a project-by-project basis and is therefore less expensive, and returns on investment are very high versus cost of entry.

The biggest questions, for S. Africa and Maine, remain human resources to develop project work. This would most likely be done in market clusters that have high use value at both ends of the trade link, such as Geographic Information Systems, and data analysis for labor market characterization to name two areas in which Maine companies and the University have national reputations.

Timeline

Below is a very fast track schedule for the completion of early phases of this work. The most difficult feature of this timeline is putting together a trade delegation in May and it may be necessary to push the last five tasks in chart off by two or more months to accommodate reality.

TASKS	March	April	May	June
Pre-feasibility	XXXXXXX	- MARKE 1888		1 1/18/2006 (CT-27/15/05/00)
Final Sector Select		XX		
Trade Delegation			XXXX	
Final Feasibility			XX	CXX
Outcome Analysis				XXX
Trade Plan				XXXXXX
Partnership Brok				X

PROGRAMME \/ MEETING WITH MEMBERS OF ALANA//

Wednesday, 3 March 1999

10:00am- 10:15am	Tea/Coffee					
10:15am- 10:35am	Introduction/Finalize process					
10:35am- 10:55am	Presentation: Maine delegation					
10:55am- 11:05am	Presentation: Mission delegation - Political					
11:15am 12:00pm	Brainstorm/Discussion					
12:01pm- 1:00pm	Identification					
1:00pm- 2:30pm	Lunch Venue: El Pote 2nd Avenue, between 38th & 39th Streets					
2:30pm- 4:00pm	Continuation of meeting					
4:00pm- 4:15pm	Tea/Coffee					
4:20pm-	Next steps					
5:00pm	Closure					
7:00pm	Dinner Venue: Consul-General's residence 66 West 87th Street New York, NY 10024					

I.D. Proposed

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