

Ranking Target Markets for the Export of Iran Construction Services

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ABSTRACT

Original Article:

In recent decades, the internationalization of trade and companies' engagement in the global market has been found with a double significance. Planning and investment to increase the share of non-oil exports in total exports and reform its combination to export of goods and services with higher technology are of approaches of vision plan that export of Construction Services is of its characteristics. Construction Services which are one of the major fundamentals in economic development of countries encompass a series of methods and tools that provide the possibility to supply goods and services within community by optimal use of resources and manufacturing agents including capital, raw materials and manpower. This study has aimed to rank export target market of Construction Services. For this, by applying Walvoord's target market selection model, the indicators affecting market selection using questionnaire have been determined, that 14 indicators have been selected, and weight of indicators have been calculated by incremental power method, and then the countries which have imported Construction Services from Iran in recent seven years have been prioritized by resolving linear assignment problem using software Gomez, of which Lebanon, Iraq, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Tajikistan and Kazakhstan have been recognized as the superior countries.

Received 04 Sep. 2014

Accepted 17 Oct. 2014

Published 21 Dec. 2014

Keywords:

single product;
Construction Services;
ranking of market; export
of product

1.Introduction

As single product in economy of country is a weakness in international trade arena across countries. Hence, to cope with this problem, it must engage in non-oil export which raises employment and involvement of manufacturing industries. Increasing non-oil export has been mentioned as one of the most fundamental priorities of country concerning economic development program of the Islamic Republic of Iran. This issue on optimal use of relative advantages of country and rise of employment concerning domestic production causes involvement in international competitive markets and improvement of quality of productions and capabilities of country. Substantial advancements in technology and change of production and consumption pattern have made living around the borders of country impossible. Hence, throughout the world, the governments have been witnessed active over the past few years, strived to supply their benefits by adoption of various policies. Among these policies, arrival to international markets and export is the most fundamental and preliminary way. Export of goods and services causes currency earning for government and manufacturers, helping them in a way to supply their importing needs through currency earning and gradually separate from traditional exports and enter into global markets. Thereby, domestic companies' information on new competitive conditions and recognition from target markets can be of a great importance to achieve exporting goals. Loss of revenues from the oil export and severe price volatility of oil, reduction of purchase power, increasing population, and considering oil as an exhaustible

resource have caused the politicians and planners to believe in development of non-oil exports including goods and services and release of single product economy as a necessity (Hosseini, 2008). Existing statistics within Trade Promotion Organization of Iran indicate this fact that developed countries have over 80% of traditional trade service and share of developing countries in trade services is less than 20% (Ahmadi Mehrabani, 2010). Increase of the volume of trade in services in the World Trade Organization and importance of role of services in national economy of countries have caused the exporters pay a particular attention to export of various services. In this regard, Iran's Services Export Strategy must have the ability to recognize and develop market and ultimately maintain it. Review of available documents indicate that underdeveloped countries especially Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), Middle East, Member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and African countries are the most important potential markets for goods and services of Iran (Ahmadi Mehrabani, 2010). Hence, increasing exporters' information on market conditions, identifying target markets, introducing their capabilities and abilities to the purchasers are the actions which require for review of rules and regulations pertaining to foreign investment and scientific analysis.

2. Literature review

A variety of studies have been conducted at the area of factors affecting export of product including ranking of export target market and Construction Services. At all the

studies conducted to date, the variables have been taken into account that has affected ranking of export target market directly or indirectly. The number of variables examined to date has been in a large extent. This diversity goes beyond so far as ambiguities and contradictive findings have been witnessed in the conclusion section of early studies. Exports have been deemed to diagnose exporters from non-exporters, i.e. internationalization process of company has been mostly taken into account. Then, researchers considered examination of external factors affecting exporting behavior including proper incentive programs. At the third stage, the researchers considered examination of factors pertaining to the companies' behavior proportional to exports and its outcomes. Researchers examined the fourth category of factors which affect exporting performance or success of countries, e.g. they have considered exporting performance within European countries by deep understanding of export and adherence to export. The major goal of any manufacturer is to maximize their profit in product market. With regard to economic theories, achievement of this goal relies on status of demand for this product, thus recognition of demander's characteristics including active and passive customers and growth of demands in future and other agents can be a strategy for the countries in future in exporting their products. To expand international markets regarding major social and economic differences between various countries, formulation of strategies to penetrate the global market without a trajectory from some stages including identification of export target markets, evaluation of exporting power, decision making to develop export, identification of export target market and determination of marketing strategies for exporting products will not be followed by success. According to foreign studies, it can refer to investigation of performance of Egyptian Cotton Exports in International Market, investigation of potential need and effects of deep integration in Egypt at the area of exporting agriculture products, determination of relative advantage and trade of industrial export in Southeast Asian countries and Latin America, and determination of the best kind of business relationship in the market for industrial products. In a study "investigation of performance of Egyptian Cotton Exports in International Market", Abo Tahab has investigated performance of Egyptian Cotton Exports in International Market in 1990. This study indicates that a high centralization of Egyptian Cotton Exports exists in India, Italy, Republic of Korea and Japan. About 50% of Egyptian Cotton Exports have been allocated to these markets at the period under study. the results of this study indicated that Japan, Italy, Republic of Korea have been the most sustainable market for exporting Egyptian cotton at the period under study. Ramezani, Moradi & Isazade examined export target market of Construction Services during 2008-2010, so as to introduce the best markets for exporting Construction Services to the exporters by ranking of export target market. The results of their study concerning screening method and potential indicators of market indicate that Ireland, America, India, China and Germany are five major countries which have engaged in importing Iran's Construction Services, that they have also concluded that Singapore, Kazakhstan, India, Australia and Sweden are the best target markets to export Iran's

Construction Services using numerical taxonomic analysis; further, they have mentioned Kazakhstan, Syria, India, Lebanon and Afghanistan as the most superior countries as the target market for this service, yet just a little emphasis has been put on the quantitative indicators in this study.

In domestic studies, it can refer to investigation of market structure and analysis of apricot target markets, concerning ranking of Iran's apricot target market. Indeed, other similar studies on products pistachios, date, almonds, cumin, Ceramics, food, clothing, petroleum products, ornamental plants and other types of goods. William Simkin and his colleague (1988) in their study have studied a variety of criteria in selection of markets and strategies used in target markets. Criteria of profitability, growth of market and market size have been recognized as the criteria used more in the companies. Strategies of quality of services, maintaining the brand strategy, low cost strategy, product differentiation strategy, market share strategy are the strategies used by the companies in this study.

In foreign studies, it can refer to investigation of Egyptian cotton exports in global market, investigation of potential needs and effects of deep integration in Egypt at the area of exporting agriculture products, trade of industrial export of countries of Southeast Asia and Latin America, and determination of the best kind of business relationship in the market for industrial products, mentioned that Abo tahab has investigated performance of Egyptian Cotton Exports in International Market in 1990-2006 in a study entitled "investigation of performance of Egyptian Cotton Exports in International Market". This study indicates that a high centralization of Egyptian Cotton Exports exists in India, Italy, Republic of Korea and Japan. About 50% of Egyptian Cotton Exports have been allocated to these markets at the period under study. the results of this study indicated that Japan, Italy, Republic of Korea have been the most sustainable market for exporting Egyptian cotton at the period under study.

2.1. Aim of study

Ranking of export target market of Construction Services

2.2. Hypotheses of research

As statistics have not been used in this study, thus no research hypothesis has been used in it, yet the research question has been proposed "what are the export target markets of Construction Services".

3. Research method

Systematic evaluation and selection of potential foreign markets are of importance in international marketing research (Doherty, 2009). Process of selection of target market enjoys a three-step approach including screening, identification and selection (Kumar et al. 1994).

In this study, screening method at the first stage and MADM at the next stage has been used to prioritize export target markets of Construction Services. In doing so, the stages below were followed to conduct this study.

1-by collecting documentary statistics, potential export target market of Construction Services were identified.

2-using field studies and reviewing articles published with authentic foreign and domestic journals, the indicators for selection of target market were specified, and screening

came to realize regarding Walvoord's target market selection model and using questionnaire.

3- Weighting important indices was calculated by means of incremental power method

4-by means of weighting important indices and ranking indices regarding each country, ranking of export target market of Construction Services was specified using Software Gomez.

In this study, statistical population(N=118) consists of organizations serving in export target market of Construction Services at the area of construction, dispatch of forces and so forth, of which 50 companies have been selected as sample group using simple random sampling method.

For this, 50 questionnaires have been distributed among a number of individuals in random, that ultimately 30 questionnaires were returned. For this purpose, the questionnaire and library study as well as interviewing with experts have been used as the research method, and MADM techniques have been used for data analysis. Sampling refers to the process of selecting a sufficient number of individuals among statistical population, so that it can generalize the characteristics of sample group to the statistical population by overview of sample group and understanding of their characteristics. In this study, the statistical population consists of all the organizations engaged in export target market of Construction Services, that 118 organizations have been regarded as the statistical population.

A question that any researcher gives a response to it during the process of research is that "whether all data of statistical population must be examined?", or it can generalize the data of sample group to statistical population and judge about the statistical population by overview of sample group. Due to saving cost and time at operational and analytical stages of research in social and management research, a huge emphasis is put on sampling.

There are a variety of methods for sampling. This study has used simple random sampling method. To determine sample size, sample size formulae with limited population have been used. In this regard, sample size will be equal to 30 at significance level(95%). For this purpose, 53 questionnaires have been distributed among a number of individuals in random, that ultimately 30 questionnaires were returned.

4. Questions Of Questionnaire

Three sections of questions have been used in the questionnaire. The first section relates to macro-environmental characteristics, seeking to identification of variables and their relationship with each other. The second section of questionnaire relates to the public space of market, and the third section relates to the special factors affecting the product. In this study, Cronbach's alpha as a measure of internal consistency or reliability has been used to measure reliability of questionnaire instruments. In Cronbach's alpha method, the scores of all items with total score are tested using correlation test, assumed that it is expected that the individuals who receive a certain score in a certain item at the same in other items, and this lies on a fact that all the items designed in the questionnaire seek to measure a certain characteristic. Indeed, when Cronbach's alpha is calculated, the score of each item with the score of

each person is calculated using correlation test, and thereby difference of all items is compared. For this purpose, Cronbach's alpha coefficient formula is used to determine validity of questionnaire.

$$\alpha = \left[\frac{k}{k-1} \right] \left[\frac{s_y^2 - \sum s_i^2}{s_y^2} \right]$$

In this formula, α , K , s_y^2 and $\sum s_i^2$ represent test reliability coefficient, number of items, sum of variance for each score, and sum of variance for total scores of items. Interpretation of alpha which ranges from 0 to 1 is the same as correlation coefficient, i.e. the more this criterion be close to 1, a high internal consistency will be shown that generally alpha (70%) is acceptable(Mirzaei, 2009). The coefficient obtained for all the questionnaires equals to 0.875 that is greater than 0.7, indicating high reliability of questionnaire. Validity implies that measurement instrument enables to measure the considered characteristic. The importance of validity lies on this fact that improper and insufficient measurements can invalidate any academic research. Validity refers to accuracy of research measurement(Khaki, 2007, p. 288). In face validity, we examine whether experts confirm that instruments measure what we perceive about them. To measure content validity, the questionnaire was reviewed and confirmed by the professors and experts. After specifying research method using proper instruments, the required data were collected to test hypotheses, and then it was the turn to select proper techniques in consistent with research method and type of variables and other factor, and use the research process to obtain a series of research findings and results to implement them in human life.

5.Descriptive Overview Of Observations

Descriptive statistics are called to a series of criteria which can represent general characteristics from the collected data to the researcher. It must draw a particular attention to this point that descriptive statistics cannot be used to generalize results to the general states, but they can be used to give a general view from the criteria used in the research to the researcher. In this study, representing tables and figures pertaining to the descriptive study, observations were characterized. As shown in table 1 concerning graphical charts, in this study a majority of individuals(50%) have had bachelor degree or higher degrees, indicating high education level of respondents. Concerning the number of personnel working in company, 33.33% of companies have had less than 400 personnel, 16.66% have had 400 to 800 personnel, and 50% have had more than 800 personnel.

row		Frequency	%
1	The number of personnel	Under 400	10 33/33
		400-800	5 16/66

	working in the company	Over 800	15	50
2	Respondents" education	Bachelor degree	16	53/33
		Master degree	10	33/33
		Phd	4	13/33
3	Respondents" work experience	Under 5 years	1	3/3
		5-10 years	15	50
		10-15 years	7	23/33
		15-20 years	4	13/33
		Over 20 years	3	10

Table 1. Descriptive results of demographic characteristics(sample size: 30)

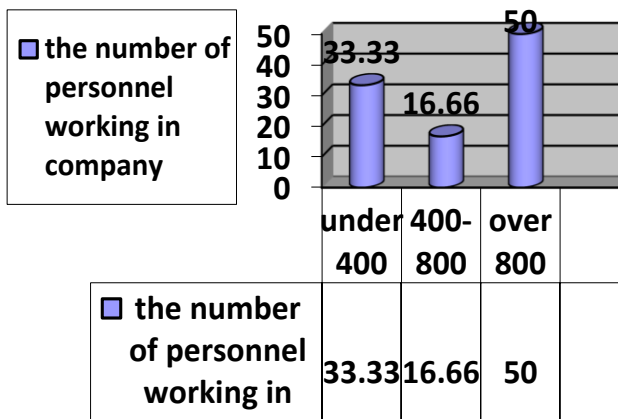


Figure 1. graphical status of the number of personnel working in the company

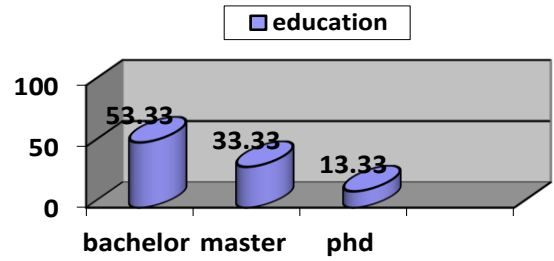


Figure 2. graphical status of Respondents" education

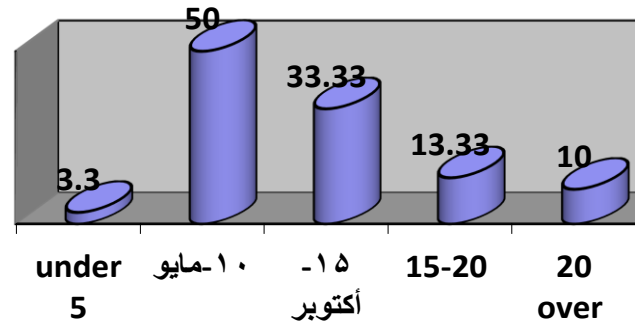


Figure 3. graphical status of Respondents" work experience
Calculation of weight of indices with incremental power method

$$W = \lim_{k \rightarrow \infty} \frac{A^k \cdot e}{e^T \cdot A^k \cdot e}$$

$$e^T = (1,1,\dots,1)$$

in the sixth transfer, Convergence was come to realize, and the results were characterized as follows:

0.069	Political information
0.021	Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran
0.037	Technical information
0.13	Infrastructural information
0.193	Economic information
0.01	GDP
0.052	Economic Growth Rate
0.027	Market size
0.078	Degree of development
0.015	Access to the market's information
0.124	Potential barriers to arrival
0.038	Comnetitive notential
0.173	Easy access
0.025	Cost for arrival

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Expert's view before ranking

Item	Political information	Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran	Technical information	Infrastructural information	Economic information	GDP	Economic Growth Rate	Market size	Degree of development	Access to the market's information	Potential barriers to arrival	Competitive potential	Easy access	Cost for arrival
Ethiopia	30	19	20	21	20	30	30	21	22	21	17	20	20	22
Armenia	19	10	8	8	9	20	20	19	19	10	9	16	8	9
Uzbekistan	18	11	6	6	6	15	6	10	16	15	16	12	10	13
Afghanistan	6	7	9	4	8	15	15	5	15	6	5	5	5	6
Algeria	4	5	4	5	7	3	6	2	2	9	7	5	6	7
United Arabic Emirates	16	9	12	13	11	9	9	15	13	8	6	14	12	17
Uganda	17	10	17	15	17	26	23	18	20	20	17	19	20	20
Azerbaijan	24	14	14	11	11	14	13	12	11	6	16	18	16	12
Germany	15	15	15	14	15	10	10	9	10	11	18	30	21	20
Belarus	1	1	3	3	2	7	7	4	7	5	4	6	5	5
Bolivia	9	8	17	16	16	21	21	20	18	16	14	15	17	21
Pakistan	13	16	16	9	8	14	15	11	12	5	13	9	11	9
Tajikistan	3	3	2	3	3	20	15	15	9	3	3	3	3	3
Tanzania	23	17	11	19	17	25	25	15	18	17	16	14	13	15
Turkmenistan	9	8	8	7	7	14	15	17	16	10	11	10	10	19
China	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	1	1	6	19	21	19	10
Ivory Coast	21	18	19	20	19	20	20	20	21	18	15	15	18	18
Sudan	3	3	5	5	7	16	16	14	14	7	10	4	7	5
Syria	21	7	7	5	6	19	20	8	8	3	16	1	2	2
Iraq	20	1	1	1	1	5	8	7	7	1	1	3	1	1
Oman	5	5	6	3	5	5	4	6	7	4	7	8	8	6
Ghana	22	10	18	18	18	19	17	20	14	19	16	13	14	16
Kazakhstan	2	2	2	2	2	2	5	2	3	3	2	7	5	5
Qatar	14	10	10	10	13	8	6	3	4	6	12	10	10	11
Kenya	7	7	13	12	12	15	15	13	15	14	12	1	9	8
Georgia	12	11	12	17	11	15	13	16	17	12	10	9	5	5
Lebanon	11	6	5	4	4	9	15	14	14	7	8	6	4	4
India	10	12	11	11	10	8	8	4	5	13	12	17	15	14
Venezuela	1	1	1	1	1	5	3	1	6	2	11	2	4	3

Ranking countries per index concerning expert's view

Item	Political information	Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran	Technical information	Infrastructural information	Economic information	GDP	Economic Growth Rate	Market size	Degree of development	Access to the market's information	Potential barriers to arrival	Competitive potential	Easy access	Cost for arrival
Ethiopia	29	29	29	29	29	28	29	29	29	29	26.5	27	27.5	29
Armenia	20	18.5	13.5	15	16	20.5	23	25	26	17.5	10	23	12.5	14.5
Uzbekistan	19	21.5	10.5	13	9.5	22.5	6.5	13	21.5	23	23	17	16	19
Afghanistan	8	12	15	7.5	14.5	22.5	18	8	19.5	10.5	5	6.5	7.5	10.5
Algeria	5	8.5	6.5	10.5	12	6	6.5	3.5	2	16	7.5	6.5	10	12
United Arab Emirates	17	16	19.5	21	18.5	5	11	20.5	15	15	6	9.5	19	23
Uganda	18	18.5	25.5	23	25.5	19	27	23.5	27	28	26.5	26	27.5	26.5
Azerbaijan	26	24	22	18.5	18.5	13.5	14	15	3	10.5	23	25	23	18
Germany	16	25	23	22	23	2	12	12	12	19	28	29	29	26.5
Belarus	23.5	2	5	5	3.5	10.5	8	6.5	8	7.5	4	8.5	7.5	7.5
Bolivia	10	14.5	25.5	24	24	27	26	27	24.5	24	19	21.5	24	28
Pakistan	14	26	24	16	14.5	7	15	14	14	7.5	18	12.5	18	14.5
Tajikistan	3.5	5.5	3.5	5	5	24	16	19	11	4	3	3.5	3	3.5
Tanzania	25	27	17.5	27	25.5	18	28	20.5	24.5	25	23	19.5	20	21
Turkmenistan	27	14.5	13.5	14	12	25.5	18	23.5	21.5	17.5	13.5	14.5	16	25
China	6.5	7	6.5	10.5	7.5	1	1	1.5	1	10.5	29	28	26	16
Ivory Coast	28	28	28	28	28	25.5	24	27	28	26	20	21.5	25	24
Sudan	3.5	5.5	8.5	10.5	12	12	21	17.5	17	13.5	11.5	5	11	7.5
Syria	22	12	12	10.5	9.5	29	25	11	10	4	23	1	2	2
Iraq	21	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	9	9.5	10	8	1	1	3.5	1	1
Oman	6.5	8.5	10.5	5	7.5	13.5	3	9	8	6	7.5	11	12.5	10.5
Ghana	23.5	18.5	27	26	27	16.5	22	27	17	27	23	18	21	22
Kazakhstan	2	4	3.5	3	3.5	8	4	3.5	13	4	2	10	7.5	7.5
Qatar	15	18.5	16	17	21	10.5	5	5	4	10.5	16	14.5	10	17
Kenya	9	12	21	20	20	20.5	18	16	19.5	22	16	16	14	13
Georgia	13	21.5	19.5	25	22	16.5	13	22	23	20	11.5	12.5	7.5	7.5
Lebanon	12	10	8.5	7.5	6	15	20	17.5	17	13.5	9	8.5	4.5	5
India	11	23	17.5	18.5	17	3	9.5	6.5	5	21	16	24	22	20
Venezuela	1	2	1.5	1.5	1.5	4	2	1.5	6	2	13.5	2	4.5	3.5

6. The Results From Research

Attention to ranking of export target market of Construction Services is one of the fundamental approaches in development of market and involvement in international markets. A checklist provided in this study can be a suitable framework for better planning so as to increase Construction Services. To identify the selected countries for ranking of export target market of Construction Services, firstly all the countries with Construction Services were specified. Then, with regard to the checklist provided from the countries which imported from Iran in recent seven years, the markets were screened. These countries include Ethiopia , Armenia , Uzbekistan , Afghanistan , Uganda , India , China , Germany , Senegal , Ivory Coast , Azerbaijan , Bolivia , Pakistan , Tajikistan , Tanzania , Turkmenistan , Chechnya , Sudan , Syria , Oman , Ghana , Qatar , Kenya , Georgia , Nakhichevan Norway, Iraq , Belarus , Lebanon , Kenya , Nakhichevan , England , Canada , Kazakhstan , the United Arabic Emirates , and Algeria, of which U.K and Canada were removed from this checklist due to little import volume of Construction Services from Iran, and also Nakhchivan and Chechnya were removed from this checklist due to small area.

After screening, these countries were examined for the final ranking. With regard to the findings of research, it can perceive that Lebanon , Iraq , Azerbaijan , Belarus , Tajikistan , Kazakhstan , China , Afghanistan , Uzbekistan and Algeria are the best markets among the potential markets with Construction Services. In this regard, the most important countries which imported Construction Services in sake of import volume include Turkmenistan , UAE , Iraq , Kazakhstan , Oman , Afghanistan , Armenia , Azerbaijan , Venezuela , Uzbekistan , Tajikistan.

1. The country	Rank
2. Lebanon	1
3. Iraq	2
4. Azerbaijan	3
5. Belarus	4
6. Tajikistan	5
7. Kazakhstan	6
8. China	7
9. Afghanistan	8
10. Uzbekistan	9
11. Algeria	10
12. Syria	11
13. Georgia	12
14. Oman	13
15. Turkmenistan	14
16. Venezuela	15
17. Armenia	16
18. Sudan	17
19. Pakistan	18
20. Richness	19
21. Kenya	20
22. Diagonal	21
23. India	22
24. UAE	23
25. Bolivia	24
26. Tanzania	25
27. Ethiopia	26
28. Uganda	27

29. Ivory Coast	28
30. Germany	29

7. Conclusions

The results of study indicate the exporters have paid attention to a wide range of factors and variables in analysis and selection of export target market. Likewise other management decisions, various factors have different effect on decision making in selection of target market. With regard to the results of study on effect of macro-environment characteristics on performance of Construction Services, it was specified that the factor "economic information" and GDP have the highest effect and the factor "religion" has the least effect on decision makings. Concerning the factors affecting public space of market pertaining to the product, the factor "degree of development of country" and "potential barriers to arrival" has the highest effect and the factor "business growth" has the least effect. Further, concerning effect of special factors affecting product, easy access has the highest role in selection of target market and sale projects have the least role in selection of target market. The factor "culture" has had not any effect on selection of target market, and the exporter believe that cultural factors do not affect selection of export target market of Construction Services

Provide a plan and mechanism for embassies and business advisors to engage in target markets to provide updated information for exporters of Construction Services.

Government must increase purchase power of export target market of Construction Services by long-term repayments in order to supply equipment and machineries.

Government can propose its financial supports purposefully and indirectly in line with the plans such as affording to pay part of the cost of transport, marketing, dispatch of boards of trade, involvement in international exhibitions, interest and charges of Iranian banks, giving assistance to execute research and counseling studies at target markets, purchase of international tender documents.

Our government likewise governments in industrial countries must grant support to Iranian counseling engineers companies to develop exports of Construction Services by means of multiple incentive leverages.

These incentive leverages can include Export credit, long-term and low interest loans as well as substantial support at the area of Commercial information and diplomatic support.

8. Suggestions

- examine status and management structures of export target markets of Construction Services and design some approaches to improve these structures
- examine the extent to which granting exporting incentives affects on development of export target markets of Construction Services
- examine and propose comprehensive marketing system to develop export target markets of Construction Services
- identify the infrastructures to implement business intelligence in export target markets of Construction Services

- prioritize factors affecting decision making for the purpose of entering to the export target markets
- prioritize target market considering sanction

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