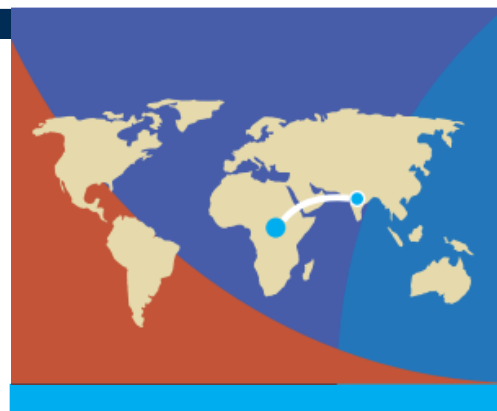
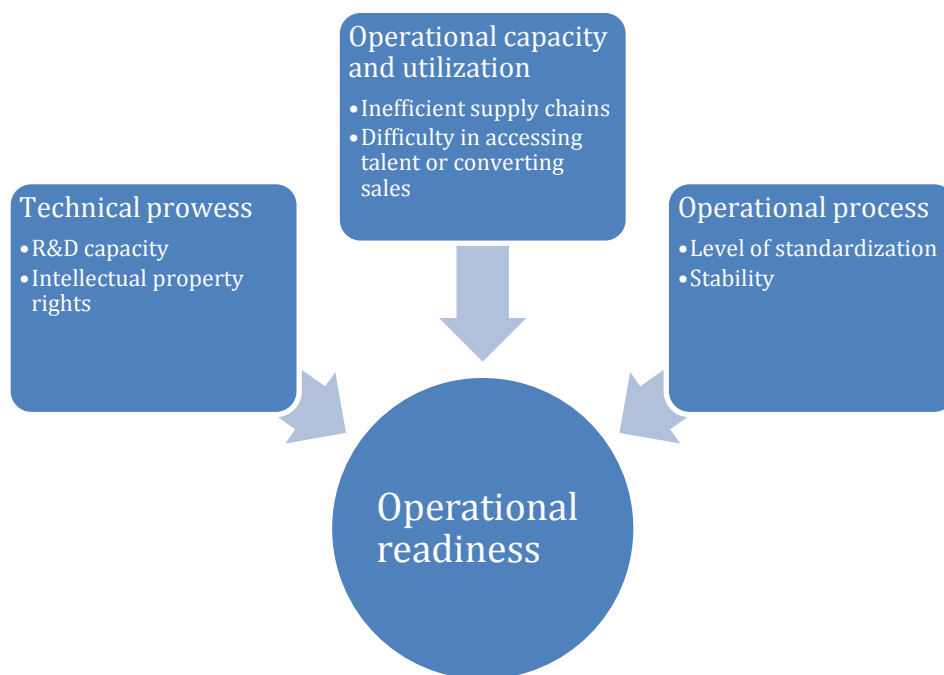


Checklist: Enhancing Operational Readiness Ahead of Expansion



Every business needs to stabilize its operations before commencing on its expansion. The factors that add to the operational sustenance include the following:

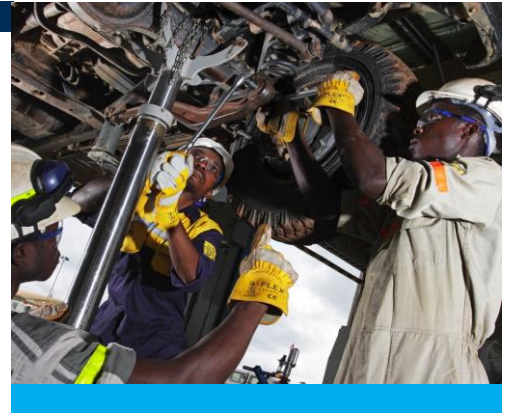


It is essential that there is absolute clarity on the above three dimensions before embarking on expanding operations to Africa. The following checklist includes a list of questions/approaches that can be reflected on and choose to act on depending on its suitability to the business in question.

PROCESS STANDARDIZATION AND STABILITY

Inclusive businesses will benefit from standardizing processes and stabilizing their operational models because a flux in these would affect operations in the destination country as talent hired locally can be trained efficiently on standardized processes and would then find it easier to navigate through the modalities of operations. The following aspects can be considered for standardization.

- Critically analyze the organizational structure – the various departments and the responsibility split, processes, and skill-sets. This would help to align the workforce with the organization’s mission and objectives in the most efficient and effective manner, and decrease the quantum of duplicative efforts, if any, that are being performed due to an overlap of responsibilities
- Document all operational processes which would assist in efficient day-to-day conduct of operations as well as for training the incoming workforce.
- Encourage feedback on the deployed processes from on-ground practitioners; this will lead to a demand-driven improvement of processes



SELCO - Strengthening the Renewable Energy Sector in Africa through Knowledge Sharing and Capacity Building

SELCO provides affordable solar products and home systems to rural and underserved households, along with standardized financing packages for consumer financing

SELCO chose to conduct knowledge sharing and capacity building sessions/workshops with African entrepreneurs to build the renewable energy ecosystem in Africa. Its practice of documentation and insights from its experience as an international advisory led to the standardization of delivery formats of workshops. The workshop curriculum had also been strengthened using operational insights from SELCO Solar Pvt. Ltd., such as challenges on policy, financing, and availability of technical support through case studies, surveys, and impact studies.

OPERATIONAL CAPACITY AND UTILIZATION

It is imperative for a business to function at a high operating capacity to maximize its ability to capture the market. A low capacity might point to several factors, which can be addressed as provided below: standardization.

- *Employ a monitoring mechanism to evaluate the trends in your business' operating capacity. A high flux in the same can then be mapped to factors such as low sales, inefficiencies and training requirements of talent etc. to then evaluate the right action pertaining to the problem at hand*
- *If the firm is operating at a low capacity because it is unable to find enough orders, it will be suffering from increased fixed costs. In such instances, downsizing or short-time working of employees is an option to consider*
- *If aspects of the operations such as product manufacturing are cost and time consuming for the business to develop, consider outsourcing or subcontracting to reliable firms for improving operational efficiencies*
- *Direct efforts at hiring experienced senior personnel in the sector – they can focus on bringing in trained efficient teams and also increase sales by virtue of market knowledge and prior connections within the industry*

DEVELOP TECHNICAL PROWESS TO HAVE A STRONG VALUE PROPOSITION

- *Invest in improving the research and development (R&D) capacity of the organization. This would help in customizing products/services to demand geographies that emphasize on different aspects of the product/service.*
- *If the product or service is unique in nature, direct efforts at obtaining intellectual property (IP) rights for the same. This would not just help the business against cheap imitation products but also improves the equity of the brand in the market.*